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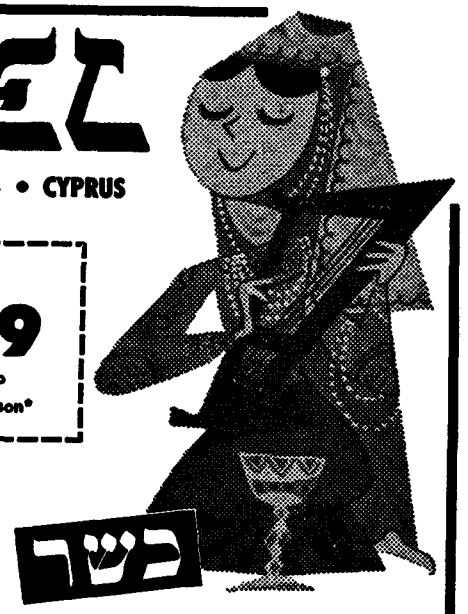

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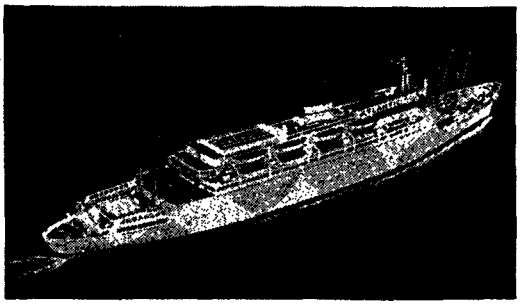

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VIETNAM—ANOTHER KOREA?

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE United States in the Vietnamese war poses acutely two fundamental issues with which American foreign policy has tried to come to terms elsewhere, and which it is likely to have to face in Vietnam and elsewhere in an even more acute form. These issues are: the unqualified support we are extending to regimes whose political weakness compels us in the end to commit ourselves militarily beyond what our national interest would require; and the peripheral containment of Communist China. In order to understand the nature of the issues as they pose themselves in Vietnam, it is first necessary to take a look at the history of our involvement in the affairs of Vietnam.

That history has been determined by a number of paradoxes. The war which France fought in Indochina until the Geneva agreement ended it in 1954 was for her essentially a colonial war, no different from the wars that France and Spain had fought in Africa in the 1920's. For the great majority of the Vietnamese, on the other hand, the war was a war for national liberation. However, for the two powers without whose intervention the Indochina war would have taken on a different character and might well have had a different outcome, the United States and Communist China, the war had nothing to do with national liberation or colonialism. As far as Communist China was concerned, the war was an attempt to extend the area of influence and domination of Communism. For the United States, too, the main issue of the war was the expansion of Communism. Certainly the United States did not support France for the purpose of maintaining French power in Indochina. The United States looked at the Indochina war as part and parcel of its over-all strategy of containing Communism throughout the world.

Yet while American interests were directly affected by the outcome of the Indochina war, the United States intervened only to the extent of supporting the French war effort; it did not intervene in the war itself nor did it participate actively in the Geneva settlement. On the one hand, the United States realized that the war was lost for the West, short of American intervention. On the other hand, it did not see fit, recovering as it was from the trauma of the Korean war just ended, to take over the military burden in Indochina which France had shouldered so long, with such enormous liabilities, and such lack of success. While the United States is committed to the containment of Communism everywhere in the world, this commitment is obviously subject to qualifications; the limited involvement of the United States in the Indochina war and its passivity during the Geneva negotiations are cases in point.

The Geneva Conference ratified the military defeat of France and the political bankruptcy of its policy in Indochina. This defeat and bankruptcy having been complete before the conference, one must ask why a conference was held in the first place. From a strictly military point of view, the Vietminh could have marched south and forced the French to evacuate. Why, then, did the Communists agree to hold a conference?

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Why did the Soviet Union even emphasize at the Berlin Conference of 1954 the necessity for such a conference? And why was it that at the conference itself the Communist powers, for the sake of agreement, made important concessions to the West? The Communists went into the conference proposing the fourteenth parallel as the dividing line between North and South Vietnam, and they retreated to the seventeenth parallel. They originally demanded that elections be held six months after the armistice, and they conceded two years.

We have heard much of negotiating from strength. Certainly at Geneva in 1954, the Communists had strength. Yet they conducted the negotiations in the spirit of compromise, and the political settlement to which they agreed was much more advantageous to the West than was warranted by the actual military situation. It would certainly be absurd to suggest that it was magnanimity which induced the Communists to make these concessions, or that it was simply for the sake of an agreement per se that they were made. It seems to me that a consideration of why those concessions were made, why there was a conference to begin with, with a compromise agreement to terminate it, will give us an inkling of the place that South Vietnam holds today in the over-all world situation, particularly from the point of view of the United States and its interests.

First of all, Communist China pursues in Asia an over-all military and political objective which parallels the objective of the Soviet Union in Europe. It is to remove the power of the United States from the continent of Asia; for American power on the continent of Asia, especially in the form of military strong points, constitutes a permanent challenge to the power of Communist China on that continent. A continuation of the Indochina war, ending foreseeably with a complete military disaster for France, might still have led to the active participation of the United States and established it as a military power within the traditional sphere of influence of China.

Secondly, what the Communists conceded at Geneva, both they and many Western observers viewed as only temporary concessions. It was then generally believed that South Vietnam was doomed; that Ngo Dinh Diem was the creation of the United States, pulled out of a hat by desperate American officials; that he would be unable to master the chaos then prevailing in South Vietnam; and that elections, whenever held, would give an overwhelming majority to the Communists. Thus the Communists expected, and in view of the facts then available had a right to expect, that sooner or later South Vietnam would fall to them.

Thirdly, the Vietminh wanted to take over the Red River delta intact rather than to have to conquer it.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Soviet Union had just embarked upon its new policy of transforming the cold war of position into a cold war of maneuver, which was to be decided not in Southeast Asia but Europe. At that time, France occupied a key position in the over-all struggle for power in Europe. Its attitude was decisive for the success of the European Defense Community. By making a concession to France, by not humiliating France to the limit of its ability, the Soviet Union must have hoped to prevent France from ratifying EDC. For whatever reasons, France did not ratify EDC, and in that measure the expectations of the Soviet Union were justified.

II

However, the expectations of friend and foe alike, which anticipated the absorption of South Vietnam into the Communist orbit as inevitable, were belied by the vigor and success with which South Vietnam set about creating a new state from the ruins of a French colony. The vigor and at least temporary success of this seemingly hopeless experiment were due to three factors: American support, the qualities of the Vietnamese people, especially of the refugees from the north, and the personality of President Diem.

The United States, once the danger of getting involved in another Korean-type war had passed, recovered the ability to correlate its commitments to the objective of its foreign policy. That objective being the containment of Communism, the United States embarked upon a concerted policy of political, military, and economic assistance to President Diem's regime. Without that assistance, President Diem could not have achieved his initial successes.

Yet these successes owe a great deal also

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to the extraordinary qualities of the Vietnamese people. Anybody who has traveled in Asia with his eyes open, beholding the different degrees of decay and backwardness, must have been impressed with the vitality and intelligence of the Vietnamese people. The order, vigor, and productivity of the refugee camps were—to take only one example—monuments to these qualities.

But the qualities of the Vietnamese people and American aid would not have been enough by themselves; they needed the fulcrum of President Diem's extraordinary personality in order to become effective as raw material in the building of a temporary political order in South Vietnam. In little more than a year Diem managed to get rid of the Emperor and make himself President; to establish his control over the army; to purge the police of the gangster element; to push back, and in part eliminate, the independent power of the religious sects and of the Communists; and thus to establish something approaching efficient administration in a considerable part of the territory of Vietnam. All this was done entirely by totalitarian means—suppression of political opposition, muzzling of the press, arbitrary executions, and so on. Nor were the positive —puritanical and ideological—elements of totalitarianism missing. Diem embarked upon a successful "Anti-Loose Living" campaign which soon transformed Saigon, the former Paris of Southeast Asia, into the dullest of French colonial towns, and he also set up a most intricate and elaborate system of propaganda and control in the villages.*

It was obvious to me when I visited Vietnam in 1955—and I told President Diem so to his evident displeasure—that these policies would inevitably lead to a bipolarization of politics in South Vietnam. Supported by an oligarchy whose interests were tied to the regime, he would have to govern a politically frustrated and hence indifferent population, while the Communist underground would provide the only organized opportunity for political opposition. By equating all opposition with Communism, he would force the popular aspirations for change into Communist channels. This is in fact what happened. Having to choose between President Diem's personal totalitarianism and the totalitarianism of Communism, which at least can justify itself by a forward-looking philosophy, the Vietnamese people at best have abstained from choosing and at worst have chosen Communism.

The extent of popular disaffection with the Diem regime is not known to American public opinion, which, following the example of the government, prefers to think of the problem of South Vietnam in terms of Communist aggression versus the defense of freedom. This disaffection is particularly widespread among those classes which are the natural supporters of a democratic regime or else its indispensable allies, such as business and professional men, university teachers and students, civil servants, and army officers. It is especially strong among the refugees from the North, who, after fleeing from Communist totalitarianism, are disappointed and embittered at the discovery that they have exchanged one totalitarianism for another. Their disaffection extends to the Kennedy administration from which they expected support for their aspirations. It is significant and bodes ill for the future of the regime, moreover, that the intensity of disaffection increases with the degree of education and political sophistication.

The attitude of the great mass of the peasants, on the other hand, is marked by indifference to the ideological positions of either side. They tend to look at Diem as a kind of American puppet, the successor to Bao Dai, the French puppet, and at the Americans as the successors to French colonial rule. Communism means nothing to them one way or the other. What interests them and determines their attitude are the benefits and disadvantages to be expected from either side. Thus they will submit to, and cooperate with, whoever happens to exercise authority at a particular time, and prisoners will join the other side almost as a matter of course, only to rejoin their former friends if the fortunes of guerrilla war should change.

III

How has American policy tried to cope with this situation? It has done so by two simple expedients, which have recommended themselves here as elsewhere exactly because of their simplicity: support for the

* See my report in the Washington *Post*, February 26, 1956.

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domestic political status quo and military defense against the foreign enemy. Both policies are simple, as compared with the alternatives, in terms of the intellectual effort to be expended and the short-term political risks to be taken. But they also contradict each other in that the domestic political status quo is the greatest single impediment to successful military defense, short of commitments in men and material on the part of the United States out of all proportion to the American interests at stake. Nothing could be simpler than to see in President Diem's regime the only viable anti-Communist government of South Vietnam, which therefore must be supported come what may, despite one's misgivings about its philosophy and policies. Nothing could be simpler than to reduce the political and military instability of South Vietnam to the result of Communist aggression from without, to be countered by military action. But the very simplicity of these conceptions distorts a complex reality, and in consequence, policies based upon them are bound to be unsuccessful or can be made successful only at disproportionate costs and at inordinate risks.

If it was obvious to a casual observer like myself in 1955, it could not have been lost upon the experts six years later, that the main source of the political and military instability of South Vietnam must be sought in the very status quo which our policy is committed to maintain. If South Vietnam had a government which could count upon the loyalty of its civil service and armed forces and the support of the peasants, guerrillas would not be able to control whole provinces and penetrate to the very outskirts of the capital. Guerrilla warfare is a political problem before it is a military one. Both in Malaya and Greece, military action against the guerrillas remained ineffective until drastic political reforms removed the causes for popular indifference and hostility. The case of Greece is particularly instructive in this respect; for here the United States in the late 40's had to cope with a situation not dissimilar from that which confronts it today in South Vietnam. The United States was able to restore peace and order in Greece through a coordinated political, economic, and military campaign which required the commitment of limited American resources because it gave priority to political and economic reforms. The arguments advanced on behalf of the inevitability of the existing political and economic status quo were as specious in the case of Greece as they are now in the case of South Vietnam.

The idea that there is no alternative to Diem is in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophecy. There appears to be no alternative to Diem only because we have placed all our bets on him. Six years ago, I was impressed with both the number and quality of public figures who took a passionate and intelligent interest in establishing a free and decent political order in South Vietnam. It is of course impossible to say from a distance whether such men are still available today. But certainly the United States could, if it had a mind to, find a general who could take over the reins of government and through whom the necessary political, economic, and social reforms could be effected.

The United States has two alternative policies to choose from: political reforms as a precondition for the restoration of peace and order in South Vietnam, or purely military means. The former policy requires the elimination of Diem and demands of American officials in the field great manipulative skills and exposes them to considerable short-term political risks, while it is likely to require of the United States but a limited military commitment. On the highest level at least, the government of the United States seems to have recognized the need for such political reforms, but there is no indication that this intellectual recognition has been transformed into effective political action in Saigon. Thus we have been forced to choose, half-heartedly and almost by default, the other alternative of a purely military solution.

IV

This policy is a legacy from the Dulles era. It was then widely held that the acquisition by a Communist power of any piece of territory, regardless of its size and location, was a calamity which signaled the beginning of the end for the free world. Vietnam, for instance, was considered to be the "cork in the bottle," the "first in a row of dominoes"; if it fell all of Indochina would fall, too. In fact, of course, North

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Vietnam went Communist, but South Vietnam did not, nor did the other states of Indochina. This unexpectedly favorable outcome of the Indochina war provides empirical proof for the proposition that Communist territorial gains can be localized and affect the interests of the United States adversely in differing degrees.

The misconception that each Communist territorial gain constitutes for the United States a calamity of the first magnitude has as its corollary the proposition that the United States must commit its military power to the defense of any territory that might be threatened by Communist subversion or aggression. The indiscriminate policy of alliances, offering our military support to whatever nation was willing to accept it (i.e. SEATO and the Eisenhower Doctrine) reflects that conviction. However, when the chips were down we were fortunately capable of distinguishing among interests which did not require any American military commitment at all, those which required a limited military commitment, and those which might require an all-out military commitment. Thus we did not intervene in the Indochina war, risking thereby, and reconciling ourselves to, the loss of all of Vietnam to the Communists. We did not commit our military strength to the liberation of the countries of Eastern Europe, of Cuba, and of Tibet. We were very careful in limiting the Korean war, and it was Mr. Dulles himself, the most consistent proponent of a militarily oriented foreign policy, who liquidated the Korean war on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum.*

It is therefore incumbent upon the government of the United States to determine with all possible precision the extent of the American interest in South Vietnam. The extent of our military commitment must depend upon that political determination. Is South Vietnam as important to us, or more or less so, than Korea or Cuba? Or is it as important as Berlin? The answer to political questions such as these must determine the extent of our military commitment.

Once South Vietnam is assigned its place in the hierarchy of American interests throughout the world, the government of the United States can profitably raise the question of a diplomatic solution to the problem of South Vietnam. Such a solution could be envisaged after the model of the diplomatic solution of the Geneva agreement of 1954, to which South Vietnam after all owes its very existence as an independent state. The United States is not the only country that has interests in Vietnam. So do the Soviet Union and Communist China, and so do our allies. The possibility of a negotiated settlement within the context of the over-all interests of the major parties concerned is certainly worth exploring, and it is an open question whether the chances for such a settlement are greater now than they would be at the conclusion of a drawn-out, inconclusive war.

A purely military policy is popular with the officials in the field because it frees them from the burden of political manipulation to which they are unaccustomed and from which they almost instinctively shy away because of the political risks involved. It is also popular with large segments of the American people because it promises a clear-cut solution to an irksome problem in the form of victory. Yet in truth, this purely military policy is fraught with enormous risks and dangers for the United States. For it raises acutely the fundamental issue of our Asian policy: the peripheral containment of Communist China by military means. It conjures up the possibility, if not the likelihood, of a repetition of the Korean war, perhaps even more drawn-out and less conclusive in its results than that war was. It should not be forgotten that, fought under much more favorable political conditions, the guerrilla war in Greece lasted five years and the one in Malaya lasted twelve.

IT IS AN ILLUSION to think that Communist China is being contained today by the military power which the United States can bring to bear locally in Laos, Thailand, South Vietnam, or Taiwan, or that it has thus been contained in the past. Communist China can if it wishes increase the challenges locally with little cost to itself and thereby force the United States to increase its military commitments far beyond its own. It will stop, as it has stopped in the past, at the point where the escalation of American conventional military commitments conjures up the possibility of an all-out war initiated by the United States. It is at that point that

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containment becomes effective. In other words, what contains Communist China is its over-all weakness vis-à-vis the United States. Yet barring a catastrophe within Communist China, this weakness is likely to be replaced in the foreseeable future by a strength which will make Communist China the foremost military power in Asia. It is from the perspective of this actual source of the containment of Communist China and of the prospect of China's future military strength that the current military policy of the United States in South Vietnam must be viewed.

If the present primarily military approach is persisted in, we are likely to be drawn ever more deeply into a Korean-type war, fought under political and military conditions much more unfavorable than those that prevailed in Korea and in the world a decade ago. Such a war cannot be won quickly, if it can be won at all, and may well last, like its Greek and Malayan counterparts, five or ten years, perhaps only to end again in a stalemate, as did the Korean war. Aside from the military risks to which it will give rise in view of the distribution of military power which exists today and is likely to exist five or ten years hence, such a war would certainly have a profound impact upon the political health of the nation. McCarthyism and the change in the political complexion of the nation which the elections of 1952 brought about resulted directly from the frustrations of the Korean war. The American people are bound to be at least as deeply affected by the frustrations of a Vietnamese war.

The present primarily military approach has been undertaken without sufficient regard for its own military implications and its likely impact upon American politics at home and the American position in the world. The only viable alternative to that approach is the subordination of our military commitments to, and thus their limitation by, our political objectives in South Vietnam. These objectives must be defined as the restoration of a viable political order, which constitutes the only effective defense against Communist subversion. It is obvious that such a political order can be established only through American intervention. It would be infantile to argue against such a policy on the ground that it is intervention; for if we had not intervened consistently since 1954 in the affairs of South Vietnam, Mr. Diem would not be its President today and South Vietnam itself would not exist. The choices before us are not between intervention and non-intervention, but between an intervention which serves our political interests and thereby limits our military commitments, and an intervention which supports to the bitter end the powers-that-be, even if their policies, by being counterproductive, jeopardize the interests of the United States.

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LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ

YIDDISH: PAST, PRESENT & PERFECT

ON HEARING THAT the first volume of an unabridged ten-volume Yiddish dictionary has just been published, people ask, "Today?" Their skepticism reflects the common knowledge that Yiddish has fewer speakers today than ever before. Why, then, an unabridged dictionary of the Yiddish language now? The editors of the *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language,** Judah A. Joffe and Yudel Mark, linguists and Yiddish scholars, explain in their introduction that they wished to create "a monument" to the centuries of Ashkenazic creativity: "We have not forgotten for one moment what happened to our language at the bloody hand of the murderer and in the tempests of linguistic assimilation. We consider our task to be not just linguistic, but social and ethical." Or, to use the words of Hillel, "And if not now, when?" Under the pressure of history, Mark and Joffe see their responsibility as primarily to preserve the Yiddish language for the historical record and secondarily to set standards for and define its usage as a living language.

Yet however melancholy the outlook for Yiddish today, its prestige in America has never been higher. Madison Avenue dictates: "Dress British; think Yiddish." Yiddish is taught at many universities; Yiddish writers, in translation, have attained considerable vogue; adult education courses in Yiddish and Yiddish literature have unpredicted popularity. The Yiddish novelist Isaac Bashevis Singer recently commented on this phenomenon, formulating what may be designated as the law of Yiddish status: the fewer its speakers, the greater its prestige.

About three million people—nearly a quarter of all Jews—speak Yiddish today or know it well enough to speak. Perhaps half as many more understand it. Before the Nazi holocaust Yiddish had nearly 7 million speakers, or 40 per cent of all Jews. Back in 1900 over 60 per cent of all Jews spoke Yiddish. Most Yiddish speakers nowadays are bilingual, knowing and speaking also the language of the country they live in, but Yiddish was predominantly once the spoken language of the Jews. Statistically, English has displaced Yiddish: nearly twice as many Jews speak English, and English has nearly twice as many Jewish periodicals published all over the world (not counting Israel) as Yiddish. In the United States, where about 20 per cent of Jews speak Yiddish, the New York *Times* has many more Jewish readers than the 115,000 who buy the city's two Yiddish dailies.

The decline in the number of Yiddish

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* Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language, edited by Judah A. Joffe and Yudel Mark. Vol. 1: אַלף — אָ (alef—alef-vov-mem). Yiddish Dictionary Committee, Inc. 32 + 508 pp. $15.00.

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speakers and the ascendancy of English are easily explained by the great migration from Eastern Europe at the turn of the century and by the enormous Jewish losses during World War II. It is unlikely that any language would long survive the worldwide dispersal of its speakers amid alien tongues and the destruction of its linguistic base. That Yiddish has survived at all under such conditions illustrates its adaptability and its speakers' persistence. This determination to hold on to Yiddish is one of the ways in which Yiddish speakers have tried to win acceptance and status for their language.

ALMOST EVERY LANGUAGE has, at some stage in its history, aspired to political recognition and social acceptance. The struggle for recognition of the native languages in Lithuania and Latvia symbolized the peasants' defiance of the Polish- and German-speaking landowners. In Finland and Norway the native languages fought for emancipation from foreign rule. In Norway the conflict persists between Riksmaal, the official Danish-derived language, and Landsmaal, the modernized standardized form of Norwegian dialects. In Ceylon today the two million Tamil-speaking Hindus have revolted against the government's plan to make Sinhalese, the language of the Buddhist majority, the official language. Hindi is today seeking status as the national language of India, competing with the high prestige of English and the multiple claims of the regional languages. Most modern languages have suffered the disabilities of their speakers, in class, caste, religion, or nationality, but none, I think, has ever had as large a share of disabilities as Yiddish.

Yiddish developed as a vernacular among Jews, under a double disability. It was despised as faulty German by those who did not discern its distinctive character. And as a written language, it had the lowliest status, being a substitute for Hebrew among women and the meanest and most uncultivated men. Early Yiddish books were addressed to "women and the common people who cannot study Torah." (The *Tsene-Urene* was renowned as the "women's Bible.") The status of Yiddish has been reflected in some of the more common epithets applied to it: *taytch* ("translation" or "explanation"), meaning Yiddish as intermediary between the learned texts and the common people; *mame-loshn* (literally "mama-tongue"), meaning one's own language, with emphasis on the woman and mother; *prost-Yiddish* ("plain Yiddish"), pointing to Yiddish as connected with the common and uneducated; *zhargon* ("jargon") and *shifha* ("maidservant"), both embodying contempt.

The struggle of most vernaculars for recognition was frequently a class conflict. The lower classes spoke the vernacular and the upper class, the nobility and the educated, spoke Latin, French, German, or whatever the prevailing cultural style was. In 18th-century Russia, after Peter the Great's reforms, when French culture flooded the upper classes, Russian was looked upon as "the language of lackeys and of all common people." Just so, Yiddish was associated with the lower classes among Jews. It was offensive to the educated upper class, and despised by the middle class aspiring to Gentile society where German, Polish, or Russian were spoken. While most vernaculars have gained status with the emergence of the middle class as an influential factor in society, the emergence of a Jewish middle class in the main spelled doom for Yiddish. (Ultra-Orthodoxy among middle-class Jews was the most significant factor in halting linguistic assimilation.) So intent were these modern skeptics, the newly educated middle-class Jews, on integration into Gentile society that they even blamed anti-Semitism on Yiddish, as a particularly objectionable aspect of Jewish separatism. At the beginning of the 19th century, German Jews appealed to Polish Jews to discard Yiddish: "How long will

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you continue to speak a corrupt German dialect instead of the language of your country, Polish? How many misfortunes might have been averted by your forefathers had they been able to express themselves adequately in the Polish tongue before the magnates and kings!" (Disdain for the language of the Jewish masses is quite old. Long after Aramaic had spread as the vernacular among Jews, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi protested: "Why should the Syriac language be used in Palestine? Either Hebrew or Greek!")

MOST OF TODAY'S three million Yiddish speakers were born in Eastern Europe, though only about a quarter still live there. (Some 470,000 in Russia gave Yiddish as their mother tongue in the 1959 census; about 250,000 Yiddish speakers remain in Rumania, Poland, and Hungary.) Transported and transplanted to many countries of different cultural climates, Yiddish has flourished or withered, to complete the metaphor, according to the fertility of the soil and the care and skill of the gardener. Its fate has been inextricably bound up with each immigrant community and the way in which the community adapted itself to the host country. The steadfastness of Yiddish has varied from place to place for the widest variety of *objective* reasons: the general cultural level of the non-Jewish milieu, the nature of the school system and particularly the existence of Jewish day schools, the segregating tendency in many countries of the prevailing Catholic culture, the absence of a native middle class and the entrepreneurial function of Jews in industrially and commercially underdeveloped countries, the unreserved acceptance of cultural pluralism and multilingualism.

In the United States, which had the largest immigration of Yiddish speakers—well over one and a half million—Yiddish among the native-born children of Yiddish-speaking immigrants has not persisted as well as in Canada, Mexico, or Argentina. In these countries, the durability of Yiddish may be attributed in part to a later Jewish immigration. But there are reasons other than the time lag that Yiddish is spoken more in Toronto and Winnipeg than in New York, more in Mexico City than in London, and more in Buenos Aires than in Johannesburg. The English-speaking countries, except for bilingual Canada, seem to have been less hospitable to Yiddish than the Spanish-speaking ones. As for Canada, its bilingualism is surely of profound significance for the high survival rate of Yiddish (in the 1951 census, though 95 per cent of the Jews reported they knew English, 50.6 per cent gave Yiddish as their mother tongue).

The *subjective* reasons that have kept Yiddish alive far from its Ashkenazic base are fewer but perhaps more potent than the objective ones. National consciousness, national will, and religion—old-fashioned orthodox Judaism—have been the dominant factors in preserving Yiddish, admittedly among a relatively small number of Jews. In the United States, the survival rate has been rather low.

America had much to offer the Yiddish-speaking East European Jewish immigrant: civic and political equality, unparalleled economic opportunities, unlimited educational advantages. In return, America demanded Americanization, or Anglo-conformity, as Stewart G. Cole termed this traditional pressure of the majority on the minority to conform to the basic cultural pattern. Anglo-conformity, long before its vulgarization, was considered a virtue by the Founding Fathers. John Jay wrote in the *Federalist:* "With equal pleasure I have as often taken notice, that Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country, to one united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs. . . ."

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Since 1788, the American ethos has repeatedly expressed itself in open and often violent hostility to foreignness, whether cultural, linguistic, religious, or racial. The Antimasonic party, the Know-Nothing movement, the American Protective Association, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Ku Klux Klan, and the "national origins" quota system form an unmistakable pattern of how America demanded conformity to its dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. The immigrants' retention of the old-country language, religion, and customs was viewed by the natives (sometimes justly) not merely as habitual and nostalgic, but also as ideological and political and therefore a threat to American unity.

Partly in reaction to the pressure of Americanization, exerted formally through the public school and the already Americanized Jewish community and informally in the street and factory, and partly in an overwhelming response of love to America, Jews jettisoned Yiddish very rapidly. The 1940 census showed how rapidly. Yiddish ranked fifteenth of eighteen groups in the percentage of its third-generation speakers. Only 3 per cent of those who gave Yiddish as the language spoken at home in their earliest childhood were third generation, while one-third of Spanish and French speakers were third generation, and about one-fifth of Dutch and German. Most who claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue were the foreign-born, whereas among other groups, the largest percentage admitting a foreign language as mother tongue were generally the second generation. These figures show, starkly and shatteringly, how few Jews have valued Yiddish enough to pass it on or even to claim it. The comparatively high rate of linguistic retention among Germans, despite their much earlier immigration and their high level of acculturation, suggests that the conscious effort to maintain the national language—a product of nationalism or self-esteem—was a vital factor in that retention.

In its transplanted immigrant existence, Yiddish has been cultivated only by two groups of immigrants for whom it has expressed the cultural or religious commitments of their past. They are either the non-religious (once anti-religious) socialist and Zionist radicals, or the most traditionally Orthodox Jews.

MOST OF THE radical immigrants were ideological Yiddishists; Hebraists among them were few. Coming to America sixty years ago, these East European Yiddish-speaking masses created not only the American clothing industry, but a host of institutions—the Jewish labor movement, the Yiddish press, the Yiddish theater, Yiddish schools, *landsmanshaften*, massive fraternal and communal organizations—through which they accommodated themselves to America and which, ironically, served perhaps more as Americanizing agencies than as preservatives of the old culture. Sharing the revolutionary traditions of pre-revolutionary Russia, they were divided on their particular Jewish ideologies (Diaspora nationalism or Zionism), but agreed that Yiddish was the language of the Jewish masses. They were the heirs of a tradition that went back to the late decades of the 19th century, to the *narodnichestvo*—Russian populism, going to the people.

This movement had had a great impact on Jewish enlighteners and radicals alike, opening their eyes to the possibility that Yiddish, the language they despised and loathed, might be used as a vehicle for their propaganda. The Westernized *maskilim*, who thought the benighted Yiddish-speaking Jews needed secular education and Western culture, finally agreed that enlightenment, transmitted even in what they considered an unworthy language, was better than no enlightenment. As for the Jewish radicals, it soon became obvious to them that they could preach socialism, revolution, labor unity to the people only in the language of the people. Few of the leaders among the radicals knew Yiddish

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and many had to learn it while teaching revolution.

Both the *maskilim,* often believing Jews, and the revolutionaries, non-believers, propagandized against the fanaticism and rigidity of degenerating Hasidic courts, against the rabbinic narrowmindedness that kept the people fettered in superstition. They succeeded in the long run, with the aid of great processes like the Industrial Revolution and urbanization, in attenuating the adherence to Judaism. Thus, wherever the secular teachings had prevailed, Yiddish was often the one remnant of a purely Jewish culture that could be taught and transmitted as part of an acceptable Jewish heritage. The vernacular became the hallmark of Jewish identity and the symbol of Jewish national self-consciousness.

It was this kind of linguistic nationalism among Jews that Ahad Ha'am particularly detested. In the tradition of the Russian *maskilim,* for whom rational humanism and high culture were the greatest desiderata, Ahad Ha'am considered the ideological Yiddishists a threat to the survival of Judaism. He wrote in 1909 to Simon Dubnow, the Jewish historian and architect of cultural autonomism: "If after thousands of years the Jewish people is to start developing its culture from the very beginning, if it is to fashion for itself a new literary language and new 'literary and cultural values' which are nothing more than a pale reflection of other cultures; if it is to be just like the Lithuanians and the Ruthenes and so forth: then I can see no point and no purpose in a national existence on so low a level."

Dubnow, also a *maskil,* was a lukewarm partisan of Yiddish as the basis of linguistic nationalism. In answer to Chaim Zhitlowski, who had become the ideologue of Yiddishism, Dubnow wrote: "Yiddish is dear to us and we must use it as a uniting force for the greater half of our people in the coming generations; but, to erect our entire national culture upon 'Yiddishism' means to cast off from us immediately millions of Jews who do not speak this language and to prepare millions of others for bankruptcy at a later time."

In another essay, in reply to Ahad Ha'am's views, Dubnow compared the Jews to a cripple with one natural leg, Hebrew, and one artificial leg, Yiddish. "On these two legs our people has stood and survived for many generations," he wrote, "just as in former years it stood on the linguistic dualism of Hebrew and Aramaic."

This was a period when nationalist ideologies flourished and when no one questioned the then popular notion that language and nation were inseparably fused. Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism provoked small nations to seek a new national mystique through the elevation and cultivation of their own national languages. The Jews shared in this nationalist ferment and ideological explosion and, in the long run, the Yiddish language was the beneficiary. The *Jewish Daily Forward* in New York City, the Montreal Jewish Public Library, the Colegio Israelíta de México, the Workmen's Circle Yiddish schools, are part of the heritage of that period, however remote the ancestry may now seem.

YIDDISH HAS HAD a more direct line of continuity among the Orthodox, particularly the Hasidim. The tradition of *targum* is an ancient one among Jews, dating back to the Septuagint. Aramaic, as the language most widely spoken by the Jews, became the language of translation par excellence in the Talmudic period. The rabbis prescribed that a pious Jew should read the weekly portion on the Sabbath twice in Hebrew and once in translation. As the Jews in the course of centuries migrated away from the Aramaic-speaking Near East, the Aramaic *targum* became unintelligible, but tradition had enshrined it as a semi-sacred language, and it has persisted as such. (It is an amusing commentary that the Yid-

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dish expression *targum-loshn,* literally "language of translation," means something unintelligible, the equivalent of the English "It's Greek to me.")

The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, urged his followers to use Yiddish because that way they could achieve spontaneous expression. The marvellous tales of Nahman of Bratzlav, the sayings of Dov Ber, the preacher of Mezritch, the prayers and poems of Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, gave Yiddish a sanction over and above its use merely as a vernacular. In a Yiddish textbook used in the Orthodox Beth Jacob schools for girls in interbellum Poland, a poem described Hebrew as the language of holiness and of the Torah. It was paired with a poem identifying Yiddish not only as the language of millions of Jews, but also as semi-sacred, the language of Reb Levi Yitzhak and Reb Nahman of Bratzlav.* In elevating the common and uneducated man, in teaching that the unlearned man was the equal in God's eyes of the scholar, that fervor and faith could compensate for ignorance, the Hasidic rabbis succeeded in elevating not only the common people, but also their language, lending it the dignity of the intercourse with God. Today, in Hasidic-based Talmud Torahs and yeshivas, Yiddish still remains the language of translation and interpretation and is, I suspect, more effectively mastered than in some secular Yiddish schools. The reason may be—though I am surely simplifying—that among the Hasidim Yiddish still fulfills a real function in their transplanted but living culture. For they believe a Jew must speak Yiddish; otherwise he speaks *"goyish,"* that is, any non-Jewish language. They have no need to ideologize Yiddish, for it is part of an organic whole, where the whole person and the whole Jew are identical. But this is scarcely true of most secularists among whom Yiddish has shrunk from an ideology into a cult or, even worse, a sentimentality.

The sentimentality is, in a way, endemic to Yiddish. Languages have their characteristics. German has been described as the language in which to give orders, Russian the language to swear in, French the language of elegance. Yiddish is the language of tenderness and endearment, it is indeed a *mame-loshn.* I recall a vivid illustration of this in a Swiss movie, *The Last Chance,* about refugees from Nazism, where many languages were used. A grandfather spoke Yiddish to his little granddaughter, Chanele. The Yiddish dialogue between them touched me more than anything else in the film. I cannot remember now whether it was the poignancy of the situation or the evocative power of Yiddish that called forth from me tears for the destroyed Jewish world of Eastern Europe. For Yiddish, originally the expression of a culture and its way of life, became first a symbol and then a substitute for that culture. Today, it has become the embodiment of a tragically lost past. That is why the Yiddish dictionary is important. It will contain the complete wealth of Yiddish, offering in place of sentimentality and tears, words.

II

THE EDITORS ESTIMATE that upon completion the *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language* will contain about 180,000 words. In comparison with Webster's 450,000, Yiddish may seem poor, but not in comparison with other major European languages like French, Russian, Spanish, or Italian, whose total vocabularies are estimated to range from 140,000 to 210,000 words. But though Yiddish is undoubtedly not what the linguists call a "sociologically complete" language, being deficient in scien-

* Two of the verses read: *Yidish loshn, hartsik loshn/fun milyonen brider./Reb Yitskhok-Levi hot mit dir/geshafn frume lider./ S'hot Reb Nakhmen mayselekh oyf yidish undz gegebn./ Yidish loshn, mame-loshn/freyd fun undzer lebn.* (Yiddish language, tender language of millions of our brothers. Reb Levi Yitzhak composed devout poems in Yiddish. Reb Nahman gave us stories in Yiddish. Yiddish language, mother tongue, joy of our life.)

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tific, technical, and military vocabularies, and meager in botanical, zoological, and agricultural terminology, it is nevertheless linguistically abundant in other areas of expression—religion, personal and social relations, morality, ethics, intellect, and feeling.

For the first time in the brief history of Yiddish lexicography, each word's complete record is given. Stress is shown and pronunciation given for Hebrew words (Yiddish is phonetic). Each word is grammatically described: part of speech, gender for nouns, verbs characterized as transitive or intransitive, with inflectional forms for nouns and verbs. Etymologies are given for basic words. Substandard borrowings from other languages are indicated (Germanism, Slavism, Americanism, Hispanism); regional and local dialects are indicated (Lithuanian dialect, Ukrainian localism). Special labels are used to indicate subject matter (mathematics, music, trades and professions); other labels identify the vocabulary by particular user—the speech of the *talmid-khokhem* (the religiously learned man), the language of the ghetto and concentration camp, thieves' argot. Status and usage labels are also given: archaic, neologistic, rare, ironic, slang, vulgar, coarse. Definitions are extraordinarily precise and subtle in their distinctions. *Oyg* ("eye") has thirty-four different meanings; *agude* ("union") has six; *avekshteln* ("to stand up" or "to set down" are its more common meanings) has seventeen definitions.

All this is topped off by an extraordinary richness of quotation, drawn from folk usage and literary sources. Elijah Bahur's *Bovo-bukh* of 1541, the *Mayse-bukh* of 1602, the statutes of the kehillah of Cracow of 1595, a contemporary Yiddish account of the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, are among the early literary sources. The recent ones include the Yiddish press of New York and Buenos Aires and contemporary Yiddish writers all over the world. Between them is the incredibly rich treasure of Yiddish literature, not only the pre-classical Haskalah and Hasidic writings, and not only the three modern fathers, Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, and Peretz; not only fiction and poetry, but also the scholarly, historical, linguistic, political, journalistic, and philosophical writings that appeared at a time when Yiddish was flourishing.

HOW DOES ONE decide what words go into a dictionary? Who defines their status? The practice varies. In France, the French Academy; in India, the government's Language Commission; in England, the Oxford English Dictionary; and in the United States—at least until the publication of the 3rd Edition—Webster's Unabridged. But whatever the source, the basic criticism is universal: the standardizers are attacked either for being too conservative, for not admitting new words, new usages, new definitions; or for being too radical, for not protecting the language against corruption and vulgarity.

The makers of dictionaries, like the interpreters of Jewish law, may be put in two categories: *mekilim,* lenient interpreters, and *mahmirim,* strict ones. In the United States, for instance, the editors of Webster's 3rd Edition are avowed *mekilim.* They were following an old lexicographical tradition which Oxford linguist Archibald H. Sayce summed up: "The sole standard of correctness is custom and the common usage of the community."

The editors of the Yiddish dictionary share this outlook. They have defined as a word in the Yiddish language "every word used by a group of Jews, thinking and speaking in Yiddish." They are obviously *mekilim,* and as such bound to incur the wrath of the *mahmirim.* Standardization is difficult enough in all tongues, even for so high-status a language as English, as the present violent controversy over Webster's 3rd Edition demonstrates. What about Yiddish then? It has no country, no government, no academy, no permanent dictionary committee, no ministry of education, no geographical limits,

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no higher education to speak of—just words and speakers.

The first attempt to standardize Yiddish was the Yiddish Language Conference held in Czernowitz in Rumania in 1908. It was initiated by Nathan Birnbaum, one of the great (and unjustly neglected) personalities of the recent Jewish past, who wanted to have Yiddish proclaimed as the "national" Jewish language. The specific purposes of the conference were to deal with standardization of spelling and grammar and the compilation of a dictionary. But little was accomplished, because the conference became a platform for quarrels between Yiddishists and Hebraists. Time was short and the ideologically charged atmosphere was not conducive to the laborious and tedious tasks of linguistic standardization. The conference adopted the position that Yiddish was *a* (not *the*) national language of the Jewish people: this, like most compromises, satisfied no one. (Yitzkhok Leibush Peretz, who took a leading role at the conference, had argued that Jews had no national language: Hebrew was no longer the national language and Yiddish, aspiring to it, was not yet it.)

No progress in standardization of Yiddish was made until after World War I. Only then were modern school systems established in which Yiddish was the language of instruction. (The Polish Minorities Treaty had guaranteed cultural or national minorities the right to schools in their own languages.) A new university-educated intelligentsia arose, identifying itself, like the earlier populists, with the Yiddish-speaking masses. They helped to create a wide network of institutions which made it possible for Yiddish to aspire to high culture. One of these was the Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo (an acronym based on its Yiddish name), founded in 1925, which became for the Yiddish-speaking world an academy and university in one, bringing to Yiddish a luster and prestige among educated people that it had scarcely ever before enjoyed. Much of this achievement may be credited to Max Weinreich, one of Yivo's founders and directors, who has been largely responsible for the high repute of Yiddish in the halls of Academe.

THE YIDDISH SCHOOL systems, after the First World War, in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, the rapid growth and proliferation of the Yiddish press and book publishing, and over all the unique authority of Yivo, made possible some standardization where cultural anarchism had been rampant. Yivo and the Yiddish schools in Poland agreed in 1936 on one hundred and fifty rules for simple, hyphenated, and compound words, plurals, abbreviations, spelling, and punctuation. But the rules were not universally accepted: those that seemed too radical, departing too much from tradition, were often disregarded. Most of the daily press has resisted standardization, modernizing its spelling only with the speed of glaciers. Even today, the orthography of the Yiddish daily press is far from consistent and scarcely correct by modern standards.

The editors of the *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language*—both connected with Yivo for a long time: Yudel Mark has been editor of Yivo's periodical *Yidishe Shprakh* for over twenty years—felt a few rules should be reviewed. They decided, on the basis of replies to a questionnaire from some two hundred Yiddish writers, linguists, teachers, editors, and journalists, to retain the silent *alef* (which Yivo had eliminated) between combinations of *vov* (generally when the double-*vov,* the consonant, followed or preceded the single-*vov,* the vowel) and *yud* (as vowel, semi-vowel, and diphthong). The other important difference from the old Yivo standards concerns the spelling of compound words or phrases (whether separated, hyphenated, or as one word). The editors concluded that meaning must determine the word unit: for example, in the new dictionary *farayorn* ("last year") is one word rather than the three *far a yorn.*

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These deviations from the Yivo rules deprived the dictionary of Yivo's imprimatur. But Yivo in fact had given the dictionary working space, staff cooperation, and moral support, and perhaps for this reason or in an excess of courtesy, the editors of the dictionary published, in the prefatory matter, the Yivo's *ne imprimatur,* explaining that it could not give its sanction to the dictionary because the dictionary had not given *its* sanction to Yivo's orthography.

Of course, most of the words in the Yiddish dictionary are like words in any language. *Ober* is a conjunction like "but"; it is also an adverb and even a substantive, used in precisely the same sense as "But me no buts." But Yiddish is, I think, more Jewish than English is American. Yiddish holds the mirror up to nature, recording and reflecting Jewish history and Jewish dispersion. The etymologies of the words and the labels affixed by the editors reveal the spread of Yiddish from the Rhineland eastward and then outward: Western Yiddish, Hungarian Yiddish; then the Ukrainian, the Lithuanian, White Russian, East Galician dialects; the later subversive penetrations from the German, the Russian, the Polish, English, and Spanish; the exotic kinds of Yiddish in Alsace and in 19th-century Jerusalem under Turkish rule. *Oysshnaydn* ("to cut out," "to carve") seems an ordinary verb, yet, unexpectedly, it contains a chunk of Jewish folklore. In defining the word, the editors quoted Peretz: "The famous forest looms darkly in the corner of the sky; on these trees our ancestors carved the names of the tractates of the Talmud which they finished studying on their way." The reference, the editors explain, is to a legend about Jewish settlement in Poland. The first Jews who came to Poland stopped in a small forest near the town of Laszczew, where they carved the names of the Talmud tractates they had studied on their long wanderings. Then they heard a voice: "Po-lin" (Hebrew: rest here). That is where they settled and the way Poland got its name.

ORDINARY WORDS ARE permeated with Jewish history and tradition. Then there are the special words. Take a place name, *Odessa,* for example. It is defined this way:

> Geographical name. Large city on the Black Sea, the Ukraine. In 1797—246 Jews; in 1914—165,000, a third of the population. Nicknames: Odessa hoboes, free-livers, crooks, pickpockets, knaves. To live like God in Odessa = to live in comfort. Explanation: No one bothers God in Odessa, no one asks anything of him, people leave him alone; parallel to: to live like God in Paris. Proverbs: "Odessa is Little-Paris." (Mendele, *Fishke the Lame:* "Odessa is Little-Stanislavchik," *ironic.*) "Hell burns ten miles around Odessa" (it is a very sinful city). "God protect us from Kamenetzer helping hands and Odesser rakes." Saying: "Don't belittle the Odessa moon" (ironic, when someone describes the wonders of the big city). "An Odessa moon"—a beautiful woman (Ukrainian and White Russian Yiddish expression). "The wise men of Odessa" = the scholars and writers of Odessa in the Haskalah period and at the beginning of the 20th century (Mendele, Ahad Ha'am, Dubnow, etc.) "Odessa Yiddish" = full of Russian words.

A miniature social and cultural portrait emerges, reflecting the ambivalence of the folk about the well-to-do, secularly educated, Haskalah-minded, skeptical Jewish community of Odessa.

Oysleyzgelt ("ransom") is another example of a word given specific colorations to all its meanings by Jewish history. The definitions and quotations refer to *pidyon ha-ben,* the ceremonial redemption of the first-born; *pidyon-shevuyim,* ransom for a prisoner or money paid to ward off persecution or avoid great peril, with citations from medieval history through the Nazi occupation; money paid to avoid conscription in Czarist times; and, finally, to German restitution ("atonement payments").

The dictionary is indeed more than a collection of words and definitions; it is a vast repository not only of the Yiddish

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language, but of Jewish customs, folkways, and history. The dictionary, when completed, will, I am rash enough to predict, stand beside Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, Mendele, and Yehoash's translation of the Bible as one of the great achievements of Yiddish.

The dictionary, too, is a marvelous witness of how Yiddish has preserved Hebrew. The words and expressions from the Bible and Talmud which are extensively used in Yiddish have received their formal acknowledgment in the dictionary; particularly the speech of the *talmid-khokhem*. The definitions of *ahavas-yisroel* ("love of Israel"), for example, encompass a Jewish tradition, beginning with the Pentateuch, and going through the Talmud, the Rambam, the Kabbalists, down to Hasidism and modern times:

> 1. Love of Jews for the Jewish people, for all Jews, expressing itself in constant readiness to help Jews, to seek and find merit in Jews. Derived from the commandment to love one another "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18) and from Rabbi Akiba's saying "This is a great principle in the Torah." Maimonides ruled that *ahavas-yisroel* was a positive commandment of the Torah. Before praying pious Jews used to resolve to love Jews as themselves: "I am prepared to take upon myself the positive commandment to love thy neighbor as thyself" (*Kavaanat Ha'ari*). "The *ahavas-yisroel* spark in each Jew should be kindled" (Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, *Likute Diburim*). 2. Trait of loving Jews even with their faults; interceding on behalf of the Jewish people and arguing with God about how wonderful the Jewish people are (reflected especially in hasidic writings and folklore, in stories about Reb Levi-Yitzhak of Berditchev, Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov, Reb Abraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apt, and others). 3. Love of a non-Jew for the Jewish people, for Jews. *Ahavas-yisroel* of the pious among the Gentiles. "From love for the daughters of Israel he came to love of Israel"—said about a non-Jew who converts to Judaism for love of a Jewish girl.

Hebrew, of course, has a particular vitality in Yiddish. Without Hebrew Yiddish appears dull and listless. Yehoash once said that the Hebrew words wore top hats. They have dignity, style, tradition, elegance. These qualities they bring into Yiddish. Their absence impoverishes the language, cutting it off from the culture, the religion, and the very traditions that shaped it.

For, in the final analysis, the religious culture created the Yiddish language. The religion and the way of life it imposed on its believers separated the Jews from their neighbors in medieval Germany. It determined the vocabulary and from the very inception made Yiddish different from German. Later on, other factors came into play, strengthening and supplementing the role of Judaism in shaping Yiddish: residential separation and occupational differentiation; governmental and popular anti-Semitism and the persecution of Yiddish itself which, in fact, only reinforced the language; restriction of educational opportunities and discrimination in employment. Finally, national consciousness —most nearly a substitute for Judaism— and the will to maintain Yiddish. Today, it appears that only the most old-fashioned kind of Judaism, national consciousness and national will, remain as crucial factors to perpetuate Yiddish.

IN A SMALL way, national consciousness has manifested itself among some young American Jews, most of them third generation, for whom Yiddish does not have the associations of ignorant immigrants which their parents felt so intensely. Mostly, these third-generation Jews do not know Yiddish. A study of an Eastern seaboard Jewish community made about ten years ago showed that among parents, two-thirds of whom were second generation, about half could speak Yiddish, while of their children, nearly all native, less than 10 per cent could speak it. A more recent study of a Midwestern community was even more depressing. Over half of the parents, mostly native-born, had heard Yiddish spoken at home when

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they were children, but only a little more than a third could speak it and even fewer could read. Among their children, a bare 5 per cent could speak it, and nearly all only poorly.

For those who know a bit, Yiddish serves as a form of Jewish identification in a broader group—the use of a word or expression helps to locate other Jews, or perhaps merely kindred spirits. Sometimes it is the object of curiosity and occasionally Yiddish becomes the discovery of roots. Marcus Lee Hansen, the historian of immigration, once formulated "the principle of third-generation interest," that "what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember." In their quest for their origin, and that background which gives their Americanness specificity and value, many young Jews are curious and sometimes eager to know where their grandparents came from and what their culture was like. Yiddish is something they would like to know or, at least, know about.

Yiddish can help give the individual access to his past, the world from which his parents came and whose culture, however attentuated its form, has had some influence on him. Yiddish is also important for the group past. Ahad Ha'am, sharp-sighted and penetrating as he was, was nevertheless mistaken when he predicted that no one would ever claim for Yiddish as for Hebrew "that it must be studied as a matter of national duty." Today, the importance—sometimes the crucial importance—of Yiddish for an understanding of the history and culture of Ashkenazic Jewry for the last five hundred years has been generally acknowledged. Neither Hasidism nor the Jewish labor movement, neither Zionism nor the Agudas Israel movement, can be understood without Yiddish. The scholar will need Yiddish for his work and his Yiddish, in time to come, will have to depend greatly upon Mark's and Joffe's *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language.*

WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN reminds me of a Hasidic story with which Gershom Scholem closes his *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism:* "When the Baal Shem had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer—and what he had set out to perform was done. When a generation later the 'Maggid' of Mezritch was faced with the same task, he would go into the same place in the woods and say: We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers—and what he wanted done, became reality. Again a generation later Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov had to perform this task. And he too went into the woods and said: We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs—and that must be sufficient; and sufficient it was. But when another generation had passed and Rabbi Israel of Rizhin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done."

For those who remember the place and perhaps the prayers, telling the story may not seem anywhere near enough. But if telling the story is the only way left to recall the past, let us try to tell it as well as we can and use the *Great Dictionary* to find the right words.

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ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

WHAT TO DO ABOUT ADVERTISING

ALTHOUGH BY NATURE as visible as can be, and God knows, audible enough, advertising remains shrouded in the mists of myth and controversy. Not even the amount expended is certain: it depends on which promotion and sales maneuvers one chooses to call advertising. There is little doubt, though, that currently we are made to pay (we don't exactly volunteer) more than $12 billion a year for efforts to persuade us to buy the products of our industry. (If "point of sale" and other promotions not using media are included, the expense is nearer $24 billion.) What does this vast manufacture of commercial influences accomplish?

The agencies profess that it is advertising that keeps the wheels of American industry turning by creating the demand for its products. Many critics, though openly doubting that nature spelled backwards will keep them regular, meekly accept this advertising claim. Such submissiveness is not just produced by tired blood: it helps the critics to wax indignant and accuse industry of "contriving" the demand for products—at least for the products which they dislike. Consumers, in turn, delight in blaming their mistakes on advertisements: "I never touched the stuff before I saw those liquor ads"—wherefore they seldom ask why advertising did not make them prefer Tom Dewey to Harry Truman or the Edsel to the Volkswagen, let alone "good" records and books. There is much more fun (not to mention bestsellers) than sense in blaming Madison Avenue for silly purchases. For, great as advertising's persuasive power is, it is limited: advertising informs, persuades, and reminds consumers; it does not hypnotize or compel them. Consumers make their own decisions and there is nothing to indicate that without advertising they would drive better cars, or drink less whiskey, or share Professor Galbraith's views (or Mr. Vance Packard's) on how to spend their money.

Nor does Madison Avenue, all claims notwithstanding, seriously increase demand for goods in general. Although there was no advertising industry in the past, people managed to spend their money. The rich actually spent more on luxuries than is usual today: advertising doesn't seem to stimulate a Rockefeller's desire for luxury as much as whatever else it was (non-advertising?) that stirred the appetites of millionaires before. Of course, most people had less money than they have now; but not less inclination to spend it. The powdered wigs and elaborate dresses, the fountains, palaces, paintings, and carriages of the past testify with mute eloquence that it does not take advertising to instigate art, elegance, extravagance, fri-

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volity, vulgarity, conformity, conspicuous consumption, or consumption in general. The widespread belief that it does rests on the fallacy of composition. Advertising can quicken demand for any particular product—which is why producers advertise. But it does not follow that advertising increases demand for all products together; what is true for the parts is not necessarily true for the whole. Though each brand must advertise to get, or keep, a share of the market, if the whole cigarette industry stopped advertising, it would not go up in smoke—any more or less than now. And demand for the products of all industries together is certainly not dependent on advertising—even though the demand for each product may be (in part). I readily grant that her cosmetics or dress may make one girl more attractive than another. But the aggregate demand of men for girls would not dangerously decline without cosmetics. (Of course, it's never been tried.)

Advertising, then, is likely to influence relative shares only—not the total; possibly its strongest general effect is on the public's fantasy life. After they are done with their shopping, people often feel vaguely disappointed: they have been had, their purchases did not bring them what they sought—romance, love, fulfillment. Advertisements certainly cater to wishful fantasies and suggest that their realization is for sale. Unconsciously, at least, the suggestions have some influence —else they would hardly be the major advertising theme they are. But would the fantasies be less frequent or more often fulfilled without advertising? I'd rather blame the outcome—where it is not inherent in the human predicament—on our whole way of life, of which advertising is possibly the most visible but hardly the decisive part. Still, by leading people to pin more hopes on their purchases than these can possibly fulfill, advertisers contribute to diversion from truer possibilities and cumulatively intensify the endlessly barren pursuit of pseudo-happiness.

IT IS SOMETIMES argued that fantasies induced by advertising add enough psychological value to the goods linked to them to justify the added cost to consumers. I find no merit in this argument. Advertising does not produce fantasies. Fantasies can be stimulated by goods without advertising. Certainly silk hats or stockings, sumptuous vehicles, furs, jewels, perfumes, caviar, etc., have included prestige and glamour value, and have induced fantasies in the past without advertising. Advertising only refashions, averages, and relinks fantasies to particular goods. What consumers are compelled to pay for is the commercial exploitation, not the production, of their wishful fantasies, which are then expensively disappointed. In exploiting them advertisers smooth the fantasies into tawdry stereotypes; this de-individualization reduces their psychological value and certainly does not justify exacting a payment.

Yet, censorship would be as odious as it would be futile. And producers certainly are entitled to advertise their products. The right to persuade is part of freedom. Just as political candidates compete for votes by persuading citizens, so sellers compete for sales by persuading buyers. In turn, voters and consumers are entitled to decide among those who try to persuade them. Freedom may mean more, but never less than this. And it would be odd if Americans were too incompetent to choose their brand of soap, yet competent enough to choose their President.

But if there is a right to persuade, there also is a right to be left alone. And if there is a right to choose, there also is a right not to be deceived, misled, or befuddled. Freedom of speech, apart from being valuable per se, is meant to help form considered and sound judgments, not to hinder them. Unbridled, the right to persuade devours other no less precious rights and degenerates into a license to bedazzle and confound, thus defeating its very purpose.

On a weekday, a man and his wife, engaged in an average number of normal

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activities—reading the newspaper, traveling to the office and back, reading a magazine, listening to the radio, viewing TV—are exposed to between 1,500–2,000 general advertisements, not counting those in business and professional magazines, or direct mail. (Physicians, for example, are bombarded every year with more than 4,000 pieces of mail from drug firms alone.) Now, to be "exposed" may mean anything from ignoring to carefully perusing the stuff. If they were altogether ignored, ads would be a wasteful and useless nuisance. If they were all carefully studied, the day would barely suffice. Obviously ads are scanned selectively. However, the selection would be far easier for the consumer, and much more fruitful for the advertiser, if there were fewer ads. It is hard to follow anything, or to make a reasonable decision, in a roomful of people trying to outshout each other. Freedom of speech is better served if speakers can speak so that listeners can listen—even if it means fewer speeches. Too many pearls, even if they don't make us into swine, will not elicit much more than irritated grunts. Too much even of the best thing—and advertising isn't quite—merely desensitizes us and makes the thing ineffective. Exposure to 2,000 ads a day is too much.

Yet, though economic life with advertisements is uncomfortable, without them it is nearly impossible. A competitive market requires the information advertisers provide: buyers must be able to locate sellers—particularly new ones—and to get information on the prices and characteristics of the goods available—particularly new ones. And consumers are probably quite willing to pay for getting the information they need and for getting it in palatable form. Thus, advertisers not only have a right to persuade—they also perform an indispensable service in using it. I can think of no better way of providing this service.

But excessive and repetitive information becomes harassment. Moreover, many advertisements are barren alike of information and amusement. Others mislead. And, sometimes, advertising hinders competition. (When it suggests that there is a difference between identical products; or when the overblown advertising budgets of firms already in the industry make the entry of new competitors costlier and riskier than it need be.) Nor are these evils self-correcting. Although each firm might be better off if all were to advertise less, it cannot do so. What is true for the whole is not necessarily true for the parts, as the fallacy of division tells us. Disarmament might help all nations; but any one nation that disarms by itself would merely invite conquest. Similarly, if a firm were to reduce its advertising while the others kept theirs up, it might well lose ground. Business enterprises can no more afford to disregard their competitors than nations can. Unfortunately there is no authority to make all nations do together what they cannot do each for itself. However, present government authority is quite sufficient to lighten the burden of advertising—without impairing its freedom or usefulness.

II

ADVERTISEMENTS MAY be more or less hard to avoid seeing, or hearing. All other things being equal, the more avoidable—the less coercive—advertisements are, the less undesirable they are. Billboards are more coercive than newspaper advertisements; driving or even walking, often we can avoid seeing them only by endangering life and limb. Further, billboards obstruct the view. Newspaper advertisements do not. And one can easily avoid them. Similarly, broadcasts to captive audiences are more coercive than those received over one's own set.* Still, even advertisements broadcast

* This, incidentally, seems reason enough to require users of radios in public places to have licenses. Getting such a license should be less cheap and easy than obtaining a pistol permit or a dog license. After all, if a dog assaults me, I can sue; but not if a radio does. And radios need no airing, and are useless for self-defense, except against other radios.

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over private sets are harder to avoid than printed ones: switching the set off and on again is almost as tiresome as bearing with the "commercial"; even if one does, the unheard, or unseen, commercial interrupts the performance—whereas reading is not interrupted by passing over advertisements.

Avoidability is one rough index to the comparative desirability of advertisements. Informativeness is another. Some advertisements give information about prices and qualities. Many department store and food-chain ads, and ads for new products and models do so. A second kind of advertisement tries to persuade or exhort without providing specific and relevant information.* The ad may simply say "buy X," or "the sociables drink X," or "X belongs," or "Mrs. Merryweather uses X," or "X brings you romance," or "X is more reliable." (The declaratives, and pseudo-comparatives, inform as little as the imperative.) Of late, these non-informative advertisements prevail. Consumers seem less persuaded by specific, factual information than by images catering to their fantasies. For to suggest that a brand of cigarettes is virile, or of beer old-fashioned, or of cars status–conferring, has not much to do with tobacco, beer, or cars; it fastens fantasies to them.

All other things being equal, the less informative advertisements are, the more dispensable they are. However, if the informative content of each advertisement must be studied, this general rule would be hard to apply. Fortunately, the coerciveness and informativeness indices roughly coincide: on the whole, the more coercive advertisements are also the less informative ones. Billboards and skywriting usually contain less information than broadcast "commercials," which in turn usually are less informative than printed advertisements. (Refinements are conceivable: singing "commercials" are usually less informative than spoken ones; in print, roughly, the fewer words per unit of space, the less information; analogous sub-classifications can be imagined for TV.) Certainly, this does not do full justice to all cases: some printed ads are less informative than radio commercials, some pictures more informative than words (e.g. in fashion ads), etc. Still, this scheme does justice no more roughly than the fiscal classification of movies and plays as entertainment (some certainly are more and many less) or of some items as "luxuries" and others as "necessities." And it has the indispensable advantage of yielding clearly defined, easily applied objective criteria.†

III

If desirability be roughly proportionate to informativeness and avoidability, and these, by and large, are associated with the media used, we can moderate advertising, and particularly the least desirable kinds, without censoring or restricting freedom. Taxes could reduce the total volume of advertising; if they were heaviest on the least avoidable and informative forms, these would be reduced most.

Skywriting might be prohibited outright if only as a matter of principle, and billboards taxed prohibitively. I think our freedom to see the sky without having to read about chewing gum has priority over the interest of buyers and sellers of anything. After all, they have many other ways of communicating. *Mutatis mutandis,* this goes for billboards, too. But they are not always easy to distinguish from signs—which obviously are needed. Signs differ from billboards mainly by being near to the establishment to which

* We neglect fraudulent ads which are illegitimate—though the law could stand clarification.

† I should vehemently oppose entrusting to any administrative agency power to judge the informativeness, relevance, coerciveness, etc. of ads. Even the quasi-judicial power to determine deceptiveness—which is not after all a matter of opinion—has been misused by the omissions and commissions of the FTC, as former Commissioner Lowell Mason shows vividly in *The Language of Dissent.*

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they point. By exempting from taxation a sign not exceeding a certain size and distance from the place it points to, and increasing the tax progressively with size, number, and distance (as well as luminosity and sound volume) until the prohibitive billboard tax bracket is reached, we would restrain signs without having to decide what is a sign and what is a billboard.

A tax on advertising needs less justification than taxes on transportation, telephone conversations, theater tickets, or soap. However, four special advantages might be mentioned. (1) The effectiveness of advertisements is likely to be heightened since each will draw more attention as the total number is lowered. Quite possibly firms will achieve as much with fewer advertisements as they do now with more. Thus the total cost per customer need not be higher, though each ad will cost more. In effect, the government's revenue may not cost the taxpayers anything. (2) Big advertising budgets make entry into some industries hard and add to the risk of introducing new products since they make it unduly costly to secure consumer acceptance. An advertising tax may reduce total costs and risks for new firms and products. (3) For consumers, the reduction of total advertising volume and particularly of uninformative and obtrusive advertisements will lessen harassing and desensitizing effects and aid the absorption of informative contents. (Effects on media are considered below.) (4) The tax may benefit consumers also by making advertising competition less and price competition more attractive to industry.

TO ACHIEVE THESE purposes, two taxes may be levied. One may be imposed simply by treating advertising costs—beyond certain exemptions—not as a business expense but as part of taxable net profit. At present, each advertising dollar may cost a profitable firm not much more than fifty cents—the remainder would be taxed away if it became profit. If it were not treated as a business expense, each advertising dollar would cost an unprofitable firm what it costs now ($1.00), and a profitable firm up to $1.50. Advertising expense up to, say $50,000 per year, or up to 3 per cent of sales, should be exempted. (The figures are illustrative only.) This would favor new products and new and small firms without requiring administrative decisions on size and newness. New firms are favored also inasmuch as only the advertising expenses of profitable firms are taxed. Yet the benefit is not such as to favor reorganization to get it.

A second tax might be levied not on the purchaser, but on the price of advertising space, or time, sold. This excise tax should be a higher percentage of the sales price of TV or radio time than of space in print media. Thus, we would discriminate in favor of the less coercive advertisements which are likely also to be the more informative ones. Here, too, some exemptions might be in order to favor both smaller media and the smaller advertisers. One might exempt from the tax the first $20.00 of the cost of all advertisements. And a tax rebate may be given to, say, a broadcasting station or a magazine whose advertising revenue is below a minimum figure per year.*

Both taxes are best levied by the federal government—though cities might want to impose additional taxes on signs. The resulting revenue could be earmarked for increases in depreciation allowances or reduction of corporate and personal income taxes.

The exemption mentioned may lead firms to have more small ads, if they could be dispersed through the paper or within the broadcast. But advertisements are best confined to specific sections of papers and magazines (employment and classified ads already are) and to specific spans of time on broadcasting stations. They

* If technical difficulties can be overcome, it might be better to make the rebate depend on the proportion of time or space used for advertising.

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would be easier to find or avoid. This can be accomplished by regulation and by not exempting from the tax low-price ads that do not appear on the advertising pages, or in set time spans. Another danger is a shift to the already excessive direct mail advertising (although the tax on advertising costs is likely to reduce it in the first place). This could certainly be remedied by making postal rates for printed matter, except periodicals and books, equal to the letter mail rate. At present, taxpayers actually subsidize direct mail advertising through below-cost postal rates. There is no reason in the world to do so. (An exception could be made for nonprofit institutions; but I'm not convinced of its usefulness.) Finally, the tax may lead some firms to make greater sales efforts, other than advertising. I see little harm in that (and salesmen will remain quite expensive relative to advertisements, even when these are taxed). All taxes, of course, have undesired, and sometimes unforeseen, effects, as well as desired ones. But I believe that taxes on advertising will yield a major net advantage to producers and consumers.

IV

NOW TO THE MEDIA. If advertising is taxed, newspapers and magazines will get less income from it. To make ends meet, they will have to charge readers more. But though readers would pay higher prices for their magazines and papers, their costs would not be higher: they would pay as readers what they now pay as consumers. Advertisers, who now make up the difference between the cost of getting out the paper and the price to the reader, charge it to consumers. Every time he (or she) buys cigarettes, brassieres, or beer, the consumer pays for the advertising cost that supports *Playboy* or *Parents' Magazine* or the Chicago *Tribune*. As the beer brewer eases his advertising, the price of beer will include less of the cost of the newspaper, and the price of newspapers more. Whether the price of beer actually goes down depends on how much will be saved on advertising and on how this affects the total cost of beer.* Nor need lower costs lead to lower prices: brewers may increase wages, or dividends, or nonadvertising promotion instead; they may even improve the quality of their beer. However, there is bound to be a social benefit if fewer resources go into advertising, though one cannot determine in advance how it will be shared.

It is sometimes said that advertising pays for itself: less advertising would reduce sales and the size of firms and thereby increase production costs. This argument rests either on the fallacy of composition—as noted above, advertising does not increase aggregate sales—or (with respect to individual firms) on an unjustifiable factual assumption: that anything less than the present amount of advertising would cause firms to shrink below their optimum size. There is no evidence for this. Why is the present amount of advertising just the amount needed to bring about optimum size? As well say that optimum firm size requires more advertising and propose a subsidy for Madison Avenue.

The effects of *no* advertising, of course, would differ from those of *less* advertising; only the latter are relevant here. Nonetheless, we may note that the size of most firms does not depend on advertising at all. Steel mills, airlines, textile mills, or wheat farms reach optimal size owing to the inherent cost economies and price advantages. In the long run this seems true for all industries. (Incidentally, such consumer services as medicine and law have not suffered, however unadvertised.) A firm's own advertising may shorten the

* Even if the industry's advertising cost is not reduced, more of it will go to the government in taxes. This will lower the tax burden elsewhere. And less advertising per dollar spent means less nuisance and waste of resources.

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period of growth to optimal size; however, the advertising of other firms may prolong it. There is no evidence to indicate that, on the average, the span is more often shortened than prolonged.

Some firms have long gone beyond the size required for most efficient operation. They would become inefficient if they did not organize into separate, semi-autonomous units. Such concentration is at best economically harmless. Since, to some extent, it depends on advertising, less advertising might reduce it without sacrifice of efficiency. I wonder whether we might want to go beyond: the advantages of less concentration and less standardization of products might well be worth a sacrifice of efficiency at least in the consumer industries; the higher cost might be more than offset by the advantages of diversity and autonomy.

At any rate I can see no virtue in shifting part of the cost of *Time* magazine to consumers who never touch it, but are made to pay when they buy a car or a coke. It would be simple justice to ask the reader who wants *Time* to pay for it, rather than the coke drinker who doesn't. And, whereas consumers are required to subsidize magazines and newspapers, books are not so subsidized: as book buyers, we pay the full cost; as periodical buyers, only a small part of it. This has widened the price difference between books and periodicals out of all proportion. But certainly reading books is educationally and culturally no less important than reading newspapers and magazines. Narrowing the price gap will be helpful.

The higher price may cause the circulation of some periodicals to shrink—if people don't feel they are worth as much as they will cost. Whether that is good or bad depends, of course, on what people do with the money and time no longer spent on these newspapers and magazines. Perhaps they will read more books; perhaps drink more whiskey; and there are many other possibilities. The high-circulation magazines and papers will be hit hardest. Since the tax favors them, we might get more smaller magazines and papers. This makes for more diversity and I'm for it.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT they ought to be, newspapers and mass-circulation periodicals are in the main entertainment media. Much of their space is devoted to undisguised entertainment: sports, society, "human interest," comics, oddities, etc. And the news stories proper often are not much else—though less openly so. "News" mostly is selected for entertainment value, not for importance as historians, economists, political scientists, or plain people might define it. "News" is what people want to read about—not what is important. There are, of course, some papers that nobody would accuse of being entertaining—e.g. the New York *Times*. But they are few. And even the news coverage of the *Times* is guided by reader interest as much as by importance: the space given to Israel clearly bears this out, when measured against the coverage of nations of comparable world importance, in which the *Times* readers are less interested. And the newspapers are largely read as an undemanding kind of fiction, as a way to kill time. It would be no calamity if circulation were to shrink somewhat as those unwilling to pay what it takes to publish papers and big-circulation magazines buy fewer of them. Certainly people are entitled to buy whatever papers they want; but not to a subsidy from the non-buyers.

I have no space to forecast how prices of individual newspapers and magazines will be affected by an advertising tax. It seems likely, however, that tabloids and mass magazines will lose a fair amount of advertising; they will have to charge more to readers and will suffer a loss in circulation.* Smaller newspapers and

* The success of magazines without advertising when cheap (e.g. the old *Reader's Digest*) or expensive (e.g. *Horizon, American Heritage*) suggests that there are many ways of skinning the cat even without *any* advertising.

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magazines stand to gain some advertising, or at least are unlikely to lose any. Their number and their circulation probably will increase also, since the gap between their price and that of the mass-circulation magazines will have been diminished.

Even a cursory look at the New York *Times* may be instructive. About half the ads now appearing in it would be exempt from one or both taxes. (Employment, real estate, and other ads cost less than $20.00 each, which exempts them from the sales tax. And, usually, they are inserted by firms or persons whose advertising budget is not high enough to be taxed as part of their income.) There may be fewer big ads for cigarettes or beer. Even this is not entirely certain since the tax would discriminate in favor of newspapers and against billboards, TV, and radio. The *Times* might actually end up with more ads. It is questionable then whether it would have to charge more to readers. But if it did, I doubt that it would lose many, since other newspapers and magazines are likely to have to increase their prices no less and possibly more.

If the circulation of tabloids should drop, the public would hardly be less informed or instructed. Tabloids specialize in factualized fiction, not information. Readers are of course entitled to the entertainment provided but they must be allowed to pay for its cost.

Advertising in "news magazines" would probably be reduced and their price increased. They are likely to be read instead of, rather than in addition to, newspapers. There may be a decline in circulation. *Mutatis mutandis,* this will be true probably also for the mass magazines.

Small and even medium-small magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly* are more apt to benefit than to suffer. It will become comparatively advantageous to advertise in them. Many of their advertisers, such as publishers, are likely not to be taxed on their advertising budgets (anyway I should favor an exemption for book ads). The magazines themselves might qualify for a rebate of the sales tax. And they will be less expensive relative to the mass magazines.

UNLIKE NEWSPAPERS AND magazines, almost all TV and radio stations get their income exclusively from advertising. Since the tax on that advertising would be heavy, particularly for the bigger stations, most TV stations would need money from other sources; for costs would remain high even if the stations found ways of saving as they certainly could. Pay TV will have to be the solution. Once more, this would not increase the cost to the public, but would shift it from general consumers to TV viewers—which seems no less than just.

Most people probably like TV more or less as it is—else advertisers would sponsor different shows. And people are entitled to as many Westerns, soap operas, etc. as they want—as long as they pay for them. However, sizable minorities would prefer to pay for different programs—and cannot get them as long as each TV station must cater exclusively to an average of tastes to make ends meet through advertising revenue. Pay TV will permit stations to serve these minorities—and perhaps, in time, increase their number. Since the tax favors smaller stations with smaller audiences, each station will try to serve a specific audience instead of all stations serving an average of tastes. TV could not but get better.

As stations become less dependent on advertisers and jumbo audiences, they will be able to determine the details of programming altogether independently, as do magazines. Viewers, by subscribing to the stations or programs they favor, will have the influence they now have over magazines. And they probably will have a greater range of choice. In addition to dividing the viewers into a number of smaller individual groups, pay TV may also shrink the total size of the

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audience—those who think a program is not worth paying for will drop out. I cannot persuade myself that this would be disastrous. (One could exempt from payment hospitals, old age homes, and social security pensioners.) On the other hand, in the new situation we might drop the present attempts at federal regulation of programs in the public interest. They are more likely to harm than to help.

Our ability to relate spontaneously to each other, to truly experience, is numbed by over-communication which cannot communicate since it reduces contents to clichés: messages whose emotional impact has been used up. Excessive and indiscriminate repetition and quantity does that, as well as tailoring to an average of tastes. Whatever substance there is to complaints about people being uninformed, conforming, unspontaneous, bored, blasé, and tense cannot be associated with lack of access to information or aesthetic experience. It is more likely to be a response to unselective, even involuntary overexposure to advertising and mass communication. Blinkers seem a natural reaction to the glare of advertising which, whether cozily pink or lurid, does not help to gauge the world's true proportions. The ceaseless shouts of commercial enthusiasm make it hard to cultivate genuine feeling and expression. In the end, the synthetic life and language they propagate impoverish and diminish actuality and flatten our experience of it. Not the least effect of less, and more confined, advertising, and of less mass-communication addressed to smaller, less homogenized audiences, may be a resurgence, or anyway some encouragement, of a more spontaneous and less cliché-ridden life.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

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THEODORE SOLOTAROFF

ISAAC ROSENFELD: THE HUMAN USE OF LITERATURE

"THAT WHICH DIES ACQUIRES a life of its own." The statement, made by Isaac Rosenfeld himself in one of his stories, describes what has happened since the evening of July 12, 1956, when he died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of thirty-eight. The image of him that survives today has all but detached itself from his gifts and significance as a writer of criticism and fiction and embodies instead his uniquely affecting presence: the wise and tender, the charming and fated "Isaac." In those circles—mainly in New York and Chicago and Minneapolis—where he is still intensely remembered as the Greenwich Village seer, or the academic bohemian, or the quintessential American Jewish intellectual, his character and life have taken on the aura of a legend. One talks to people who knew him and they speak his name in a special way, as though the word "Isaac" were precious and had incantatory power—a way of recalling not only him but something valuable in themselves.

Nor did one have to know Rosenfeld to be affected in this way. Reading his criticism, as I avidly began to do in college, was almost always a personal experience—a lesson in what it meant to be human as well as educated, straight as well as sophisticated. As one does in such cases, I invented a figure to fit the voice and the name: a tall, powerful, inward Russian Jew. Some of my details turned out to be pretty wide of the mark, for behind that warm, masculine tone was in fact a pale, chubby *luftmensch,* gazing quizzically over the top of his glasses like a figure out of the Yiddish renaissance. However, the substance of my image was accurate, deriving as it did from the simple, unmistakable presence of character on each page he wrote, a strength of heart and mind that communicated itself even when the level of the discussion was somewhat over my head. Responding to his charisma and adopting him as my special mentor, I was behaving no differently from the group of his students at the University of Minnesota who, I am told, used to trail him around the campus.

I begin with these matters because they seem to me important. Rosenfeld's appeal, particularly as a critic, comes in good part from the ability, rare in modern criticism, of making one *care.* This ability was the result of personality as well as of precept, an open, vulnerable engagement of his nature that differed little from his way of relating to people and that he was no more able to avoid than to fake. However, he was also acting on a principle—that a judgment of a book or a writer, like that of a life, was an individual act: to be impersonal was to be evasive. He did not believe for a moment in T. S. Eliot's influential notion that literature was an "escape

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from personality"; his writing was rather a test of it, a way of putting his reactions, and ultimately his values, through the fire of honesty and clarity. The quality he most admired was what he called inwardness or *Innerlichkeit*—the imaginative self-awareness that formed the true relation between subject and object and between the experience of the man and the identity of the writer. From the acknowledgment—rather than the evasion—of personality, he drew his detachment.

PASSAGE FROM HOME, Rosenfeld's first novel, is a study in the development of his inwardness—the story of a boy-philosopher, "sensitive as a burn," whose moral intuitions are the more remarkably sophisticated as his actual experience of life is limited, even relatively retarded. A child of the tidy and solemn and self-enclosed life of a petty-bourgeois family on Chicago's Jewish West Side, Bernard describes himself at the age of fifteen as a "fervent but rigid little boy, nervous, fastidious, plagued by a sense of order and propriety." But his imagination is that of a rebel, and not very far from the drab streets of home is the Near North Side where his aunt Minna lives in splendid bohemian isolation from the family.

In time, Bernard runs away from home to live with Minna and her lover. However, he discovers that his aunt's sacred "freedom" contains little more than bitterness, and in her tense and sloppy relations with life he eventually detects more misery and waste than there is in the depressive, cautionary moralism of his father's world to which he returns in the end. His "actual longing," he finds, "looked neither to home nor exile, but to a life foreign to both in which some beauty and freedom prevailed." Bernard has at least one glimpse of the quality of this life when he goes to the home of a Hasidic Rebbe with his grandfather and sees the face of the cranky, ineffectual old man grow radiant with joy and dignity in sharing the wisdom of Reb Feldman and the ecstatic dancing of his followers. Later, Bernard realizes that it is for these transcendent moments of true understanding and true connection that one must live. In a remarkable passage toward the end of the novel, he sees the alternative spelled out as he sits in a conservatory in which huge tropical plants are kept. He senses that these plants have a "much stronger and more ponderous grasp of life" than he does, and that beside them, his own existence seems "ailing and cold . . . a form of death." At the same time whatever little life he has in himself is also merely part of their blind, unconscious cycle of growth and decay, and subject to the same process of "meaningless non-being, counting for nothing."

The autobiographical ground of *Passage from Home* is particularly apparent at the points of emphasis where character and theme intersect. Rosenfeld, like his young hero, felt that values must derive from nature as well as transcend its blind and indifferent course. Like Bernard's encounter with the plants, this was a matter of experience rather than theory; as Rosenfeld later wrote—"The natural derivation of value must be experienced directly, the dependence of everything on nature must be felt concretely within one's own life, before naturalism can be anything more than an attitude and a superficial one at that." Similarly, Bernard's early grasp of his "homelessness" in the world, his glimpses of "that empty space which . . . stretched between person and person, between ignorance and knowledge, between one hand and the other," his experience with the "divided and alien aspect of life," were, for Rosenfeld, some of the primary facts of his own identity; and from them came his abiding preoccupation with the problems of human ties and self-integration. Bernard also shares his creator's efforts to feel more directly and deeply, to define his life and its quality by his emotional attachments. Or again, the boy's notion of a freedom beyond self-indulgence, one that must be fought for against inner fluidity, inhibition, and com-

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promise, underlies Rosenfeld's prolonged struggle toward the same end.

Finally, there are the terms of Bernard's passage from home, which stand as a paradigm of Rosenfeld's own journey—that is, from the restraints of the parochial Jewish culture and the "essential sadness" of its life, to the "freedom of the world without God against which we shut our doors," and the effort to find in this world a measure of both natural and spiritual satisfaction. But what gives this passage its special character is precisely the fact that it never ended. Just as Bernard's "passage" involves a telling experience of Jewish mysticism and the realization that he resembles more than anything else the father he has fled, so Rosenfeld's character and writing involve a to-fro relationship between what he called "Jewish intellectualism" and a type of Reichian-method bohemianism.

In 1941 Rosenfeld left Chicago and came to New York. He was twenty-three, recently married, and starting on a fellowship in philosophy at N.Y.U. Within a year he gave up school to become an editor at the *New Republic*. By the end of 1943 he had established himself as a literary journalist of the first rank and a fiction writer of unusual promise. Almost overnight, this young unknown from Chicago had emerged as the rising star on the New York literary scene and one of the key representatives of the post-Marxist, post-depression temperament.

Rosenfeld's response to his fortune was to leave the *New Republic* after a year and take a job on a barge in the East River. After that, he lived in the Village and went on his way. The self-image that he sought to preserve and assert was that of the marginal man who stands at a necessary remove from all entanglements foreign to his nature, of the uprooted intellectual who comes to rest at a position only to move on again. Like many writers of his period he described his condition as one of alienation. By his nature he would have preferred a time and a culture when a writer was able to speak for his people, to identify his consciousness with theirs. He had had a taste of some such solidarity during the late 30's and had seen it operating in the fiction of a folk-artist like Sholem Aleichem on which he had been raised. However, the dehumanizing commercial society he saw himself living in during and after the war offered no role to the writer which he did not think was disastrous, and he saw no other resource for the writer in an "age of enormity" than his own humanity. This he kept alive and concrete by being "the man whom one encounters when there is no longer any uniform to wear . . . the man who is naked, who is alone, and the man who pretty much of the time is afraid: the man who sees himself as he really is in this flesh and in these bones and in these feelings, in these impulses, in these emotions. . . ." Such a man had no social role, only a positive commitment to being alive—that is to the perspective of his own experience, to the satisfaction of his natural desires, and to the consciousness and truth that could be found even in our artificial and fearful times. The commitment to this image of himself shaped his daily life—that of a steadfast and eventually irreversible non-conformity—and also his symbolic life—that of a free seeker whose fate would be either an adventure or a crack-up of the spirit. It proved to be both.

From the start, he thought of himself as primarily a writer of fiction, but his strongest and most original writing was generally to be found in his criticism. Most of his stories, like *Passage from Home,* were analytic rather than descriptive and dramatic—intricate, well-lighted, but rather colorless. His fictional imagination was introspective and symbolic, and it was best at producing an air of reality when it was freed from representing the daily world. His two best stories—"The Hand That Fed Me" and "King Solomon," the one at the start of his career, the other at the end—were freely imagined and powerfully felt studies in self-characterization. Naturally drawn to Kafka and

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his philosophical parables of alienation, he also tried to develop the intuitive and manifold grasp of life that he admired in Tolstoy, and his career in fiction, like his character, involved a prolonged conflict between his predisposition for and skill at dialectic and his insistence upon the primacy of feeling. At the back of his fiction was often a series of luminous ideas about his experience that were struggling unsuccessfully to become an intuitive feeling.

Even in his earliest book reviews, there was seldom any sense of struggle. Given a book, he quickly saw its salient characteristics, the general point to be developed from them, and the precise emotional tone that his judgment should carry. This was true whether he was discussing the technique of Nancy Hale or Kenneth Patchen, the world of Jean Malaquais or Sholem Aleichem, the aesthetics of Kenneth Burke or the problems of philosophical naturalism. As a literary critic he was noticeably freer of preconception and influence than he was in his fiction, and his sensibility operated usually in a more truly personal and vivid way. His aim was to restore the "confidence, within our right, to take a simply human measure of literature," and so his own humanity was always at stake, the source of his attitudes and tone. While the discipline of letters after the war was everywhere becoming concerned with the detection of subtlety and order, and the influential critics were busy with the canons of explication that released in a jet of analysis those meanings that our age still loves to constantly rediscover and reencapsulate, Rosenfeld's abiding concern was for "the plain fact, the plain reality of human life," as it was captured or missed or compromised by a writer. His method, if he can be said to have one, was Sainte-Beuve's principle that criticism is "justness of characterization." He tended to work from a close description of the writer's image of experience, and mainly by "taking a good look," as he liked to say, at the literary and moral values that shaped this image, he usually made his way to the center of the book under discussion and of the writer's *oeuvre,* often within 1,000 words. How much of inner or social actuality was a Henry Miller or a Henry Green or a John O'Hara able to grasp by means of the attitudes with which each approached and represented experience; how deep did they go in their judgments of it? These were the typical questions Rosenfeld asked and answered. In his explication and judgment of the character—the moral-aesthetic core—of a book, he was aided by a classical critical style—simple, limpid, but with great power of definition and concentration. Into this style flowed much of his nature—his directness and subtlety, his wit and earnestness, his taste for dialectic and concreteness, his anger and his love.

YET, HOWEVER NATURAL was the cast of Rosenfeld's critical imagination, it was also fairly typical of the literary temperament that he found in New York: the firm, terse, intellectually ambitious prose, the fluent, sophisticated breadth of reference, the concreteness of idea—political at the core—the taste for epigram. It was a style, as Seymour Krim has recently pointed out, that young Jewish writers in particular aspired to control, and during the 1940's a good number of them succeeded. Besides Rosenfeld there were Saul Bellow, Delmore Schwartz, Alfred Kazin, Irving Howe, Leslie Fiedler, Robert Warshow, to name only some of the more prominent ones. Their backgrounds in lower- or middle-class Jewish life gave them certain similarities in attitude and ambition that have come to be discussed a good deal in recent years; but perhaps more crucial to their work was the legacy of political and social awareness that they had brought from the 1930's, and their common search for direction in the dark and lonely years of the early 1940's.

Like many of these young writers who came out of the depression, Rosenfeld had learned, as he says, "through political activity, to admire the vigor which a social

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orientation will impart to thought," and from the start his criticism was given urgency and point by his consciousness of what a given book was saying—implicitly and unconsciously as well as explicitly—about the times, about us. He took positions, committed himself; his mind was most political in the sense that he distrusted "wisdom without thesis—the inexpensive kind." But if the young Rosenfeld's experience as a Trotskyite had made him aware of the traction and thrust of radical ideas, it had also made him aware of the ironies of accepting them. As he put it in his early story, "The Party":

> To us has been willed also a fortune; as yet it has no value except in our own circle. . . . But what a fortune—the whole world!—Some day the world may actually fall into our hands! Then where would we run?

The thought and the tone were already typical. Where to go now? What to live for? These became the leading questions as the "economic crisis" of the 30's faded into the "moral crisis" of the 40's and "the alienation of the masses" was changed by the war psychology and the war economy into the "alienation of the individual." This is the period of *Partisan Review's* series on "The New Failure of Nerve," of Bellow's *Dangling Man,* of Rosenfeld's story "The Hand That Fed Me." The last is a complex evocation of the new underground man. It is made up of a series of unanswered letters from a young Jewish intellectual—whom the end of the Writers' Project and the coming of the war have made "irrelevant"—to a working-class girl from a Russian family who had flirted with him a few years before at a WPA office and then suddenly dropped him, as he believes, for a dull but successful white-collar man. The political parable here is fused with a social one—the Jewish boy who goes on carrying a torch for a Gentile girl, hurling at her indifference his protests and solicitations, now proud and then humble, now demanding that attention be paid to his injuries, then offering himself all over again. The third theme of the story is the unfolding of Feigenbaum's present isolation and frustration as one of the "bare, pared, essential" men, desperately in need of some sense of personal meaning and hope, who says near the end on a note of purest existentialist doctrine: "For that is happiness: The conviction that something is necessary." Then, in all the irony and sadness of the post-depression blues, Feigenbaum concludes:

> Be gentle to the unfulfilled, be good to it. We are accustomed to sing the joys of the happy and fulfilled men. Let us also learn to sing of the desolate, the empty men. Theirs is the necessity without the fulfillment, but it is possible that even to them —who knows—some joy may come.

IN THE TONE of the story, Jewish sensibility fuses with the new existentialist one: for example, the little question "who knows" tucked into Feigenbaum's bitter analysis of his aloneness and freedom. In the early 1940's, the situation of the contemporary Jew adrift in a Gentile society could be felt as a parallel to the aloneness of the artist and the radical in a prosperous mass society. "As a member of an internationally insecure group," Rosenfeld wrote of the Jew in 1944, "he has grown personally acquainted with some of the fundamental themes of insecurity that run through modern literature. He is a specialist in alienation (the one international banking system the Jews actually control)." But Feigenbaum's position on the extreme also provides a "comfort" that as a Jew he knows in his veins. His wacky little "who knows" comes like a murmur from the past, a remnant of a long tradition of hope in misery, of the shrug between adversities, that characterized a people who accepted suffering rather than anything short of complete deliverance. Similarly, Feigenbaum's final statement to the girl ("But God, if you only knew, if you only knew how willing I am—always —to take the risk of my happiness!"), is another ground-note of a religious culture which, as Rosenfeld wrote of Sholem

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Aleichem's comedy of endurance, had never learned in its unremitting hunger for Eretz Yisroel "to rationalize adaptation to the world." To the extent that he holds out, delivers himself up to the fantasy of his desires, insists on receiving nothing short of full gratification and transcendence, Feigenbaum is a true son of East European Jewry, among his other roles. And he resembles his creator in nothing so much as his faithfulness to the saving image of his expectations and what he was willing to endure for it.

Like his unsuccessful alter-ego, Feigenbaum, Rosenfeld was obsessed for many years by the familiar Jewish theme of salvation—or what Harold Rosenberg, in a brilliant reading of Jewish character, once called "the Jewish vertigo." Naturalist that he was, Rosenfeld saw the way out of the underground not through Jewish faith in another, redemptive place but through the satisfaction of his sexual desires. But he was a mystic for all that—and a Jewish one. He tried to bridge the gap between alienation and connection, depression and joy, secularism and transcendence, through the flesh rather than through religious experience, and he found his mentor in Wilhelm Reich. However, Rosenfeld's Reichianism, under the inevitable conditioning of his character, often reads as much like Hasidism. "To love all love," he writes at one point in his journal, "even the beloved partner's love for another. For then we see the world spelled out in letters of flame."

IN THE MEANTIME HE wrote his criticism from the point of view of a man trying to remain level with his generation's experience and casting about for signs of life, awareness, moral initiative in the cultural doldrums that had followed, in William Phillips' words, "the utter breakdown of values and distinctions and a failure of the will to independent radical expression." Rosenfeld believed that philosophical naturalism offered the best ground for the reconstruction of values but that it would first have to go beyond the finicky and narrow rationalism in which it was bogged down. In the contribution of Hook, Nagel, and Dewey to the "Failure of Nerve" symposium, he saw the failure of naturalism to confront the motives for the growing allegiance to the obscurantism and consolations of religion by dealing with the contemporary yearning for belief "as an illegitimate form of inference." He believed that naturalism "must be liberated, broadened, and extended over the regions in which the dominant anxieties of our time have grown." Further, it must attend to, not simply deplore, the irrational in man as a dominant factor in human personality. Finally, he noted that orthodox naturalism in its adherence to the methods of science had missed "the richness, the variety, pleasure, tragedy, the sheer possibility of existence," and that in its increasing commitment to the analysis rather than the assertion of values there lay its own failure of nerve, or, as he put it, "failure of verve."

Besides its methodology, then, naturalism required what he called "the full moral temperament" to provide the motive and imagination for its doctrines. In the fiction he was sent to review he saw much the same problem: a preoccupation with literary method or style, if not merely with the writer's own ego, a narrowed range of moral awareness and judgment. Again, what was needed was the inwardness and comprehensiveness of temperament that would allow the writer to grasp and respond to the daily losses that all defensible values were suffering, and a renewed vitality that came from the struggle for affirmation. The artist's primary task, as he wrote in 1944, was "to bring together the human and animal in man, to make an imaginative synthesis of what society has dismembered." In the work of Nancy Hale or Irwin Shaw or John O'Hara, on the one hand, and of Henry Miller or Kenneth Patchen, on the other, he saw little of this synthesis, or little chance of it. In the first case the human animal was reduced to his behavior, in

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the second to his fantasies and sensations. In general, the problem of the fiction writer could be summed up as follows:

> You have a story to tell and you sit down to write it, and you might as well be wood for all the place there is in modern fiction for the fact that you are human. You are either hard-boiled or hysterical; you are either a grim little behaviorist, as objective as a sack of nails, or a natural gusher with a wild mouth or snakes in your hair. . . . Choose either pose and say nothing. Or choose surrealism and go to sleep.

In fictional terms, the problem was the reconstruction of character. "Character" —whether in the conventional literary sense or as the writer's self-portrayal—was for Rosenfeld not only the essential element of fiction but also the most telling test of the writer's intelligence and passion, his capacity for understanding and judging the world. Thus the trouble with Irwin Shaw was that his characters were constructed from a false sophistication, a tissue of Freudian and liberal platitudes in the service of the "guts and dry Martini" attitudes to life, and from an affirmation that begins by accepting "nearly everything as it is." In a British novelist like Charles Williams the characters were weak because they were made up completely of writing or "sensibility" in the service of a fastidious piety. "Gross distinctions [such as that between life and death] did not concern him," Rosenfeld writes of Williams. "His was too fine a sensibility to be impressed by anything obvious."

ROSENFELD'S OWN ATTITUDES about alienation and freedom led him to the example of Kafka, whose alienated men were cast whole, despite their creator's full recognition of the modern forces of fragmentation that operated outside and within them. What also drew Rosenfeld to Kafka was the comprehensiveness of his art and the singleness of his purpose: his struggle to arrive at a "purely human freedom," wrested from all the obstacles of the external world and of the self. By his genius for combining and unifying disparate traits of experience, Kafka had created characters of such thick and complex texture that a figure like K. could stand for theological, moral, psychological, social, and even political man; but even so, Kafka's description of human nature was seen to be complete only when one grasped that its "final cause" was the assertion of man's irreducible freedom.

Such an affirmation appealed deeply to Rosenfeld. So, too, did Kafka's method in its marriage of storytelling and a philosophical order of thought. And there must also have been an equally deep attachment to this lonely, transcendant art produced by another neurasthenic Jew, who had been able to sublimate his own and his people's needs and terrors into an absolute statement of the human crisis; here Rosenfeld found the ghetto sensibility, which he himself loved, with all its hallucinations and hope and ironies both intact and transformed, reaching outward in Kafka's parables to comprehend and redeem the broken moral order of Europe.

During the later 40's Kafka became a particularly relevant figure in this last respect. In 1943 Rosenfeld had written that the recent sufferings of the Jews would lead their writers "to make certain inevitable moral discoveries. These discoveries, enough to indict the world, may also be crucial to its salvation." In the ensuing five years, as the first reports of the Nazi death camps mounted and later the memoirs and studies began to be published, Rosenfeld himself was making the discoveries he had predicted. In 1948 he published a review of Jacob Pat's *Ashes and Fire* in which he argued that our "numbness" when confronted by reports of the screams of the dying Jews made us "no different from the murderers who went ahead and did their business and paid no attention to the screams." His point was that to acknowledge the facts in full, both of the screaming and the numbness, was to realize that the fundamental reality of Western culture was now one of terror. All the rest was the blindness

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of wishful thinking, the comforts of complacence—especially the liberal assumption that the slaughter lay "within the realm of the explainable, the workable, the preventable," that is, of the old morality of good and evil. Another book he reviewed, on the Soviet labor camps, provided but another text for the moral.

In an essay of the following year titled "The Meaning of Terror," Rosenfeld developed his proposition that terror had become the main reality by examining the current state of the culture. One recognizes today in one's moments of truth that a civilization which killed 6,000,000 innocent Jews yesterday, or used the atom bomb on the civilian population of a defeated enemy, may very well allow 60,000,000 on each side to die tomorrow—and that no traditional culture survives the abrogation of its canons of good and evil. To Rosenfeld this truth was already perfectly clear in 1949:

> War is the model enterprise and the model form of communality. These are abstract propositions, but even so they are obvious; when we fill them in with experience, they are overwhelming. Unfortunately, there is nothing else into which we can fit our experience—traditions are broken and culture is unavailable. Our culture is an empty form, standing for a continuity of experience which is now discontinued, for the reality and inviolability of human values that are everywhere violated and denied. . . . Today the cultured man is isolated . . . the cultural form that conveyed humanity and assured the transaction from one man to the next has been destroyed.

To bear witness to these facts was essential, if our sense of humanity was to remain concrete and a culture be initiated that conformed again to men's experience. But with this knowledge of terror beyond evil, one was led to give up the old and equally compromised and useless notions of good and to realize that the only basis of renewal lay in a "joy beyond good." The ground of this joy was a radical humanism nurtured by the development of "a new capacity, proof against terror, to experience our natural life to the full."

During the latter part of the 40's, Rosenfeld worked on a novel that incorporated his Reichian analysis of terror and joy in a Kafkaesque method and perspective. *The Enemy* (of which three sections have now been published*) begins in a setting of prolonged and indefinite war; its hero, a pleasant intellectual named Brigadier, has been given the task of determining the nature of the enemy. When conventional methods—observation and interrogation, then torture and murder—are found to be unavailing, Brigadier disguises himself and under the name of Pathfinder travels into the country of the enemy to acquire definitive information. But the nature of the enemy remains obscure despite his best efforts; the intelligence he collects is mainly about himself, derived in good part from his experiences with asceticism and sex along the way. In time the landscapes of repression—stockade and monastery—give way to those of liberation—peaceful towns, green woods, and running water.

The Enemy was completed in 1951. The three published sections are deeply conceived and beautifully written, but the novel was rejected by Rosenfeld's publisher, and then by others. Whatever the publishers' reasons for rejecting it, by 1951 it was no longer a very "topical" book. The Kafka vogue had run its course; Reichianism was taking on an increasingly crackpot aura; and, more importantly, the sense of the age had turned. COMMENTARY, which, in its beginnings, in 1946, published a symposium on the crisis and alienation of the individual, was by 1949 asking its writers if the anti-Semitic tradition in English and American literature blocked their "full participation and integration in the tradition." The next year *Partisan Review* was asking its contributors if they felt that culture could exist without a positive religion (a far cry from

* "The Brigadier," *Partisan Review* (March–April, 1947); "In the Monastery," *Kenyon Review* (Summer 1951); "In the Holy City," *New World Writing 20*.

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the tenor of the "Failure of Nerve" series of 1944). And in 1952 came its famous symposium "Our Country and Our Culture," whose keynote was the reaffirmation and rediscovery of America. What all of this, and more, bespoke was a new political and social orientation on the part of the old radical intellectuals, which, in 1946, Rosenfeld had described as the shift from Marx to Freud, from "change the world" to "adjust yourself to it." He saw it as an orientation that "blesses the bourgeois in all of us" by shifting the perspective from a radical and historical understanding of contemporary society to one of accommodation and apologetics and by trading in the lonely sense of differences for the "ecstasy of belonging."

This was not the way out of the "terror," and Rosenfeld resisted it. If indeed the end of alienation had arrived, why this was simply because society had fulfilled the intellectuals' worst fears and expectations, thereby ending their sense of being outside of it. He did not worry about the problems of integrating and participating as a Jewish writer ("So they won't name any streets after me"). He held out against the refuge of religion and took the risks of the margin of freedom he guarded against the encroachment of an increasing politicalized age. In 1952 he left Greenwich Village and went away to teach at a university, but he did not confuse its quiet atmosphere, its orderly intellectual interests, its highly developed manners with the different tone of American life and culture outside the academy. The new interest in social codes and manners that had gone hand-in-hand with the embourgeoisement of the old radicalism seemed to him largely beside the point, whether of fiction or of contemporary society. Responding to Lionel Trilling's idea that manners were indispensable to the novelist for the "hum and buzz of implication" they gave to character, Rosenfeld described this argument as a "variant of the old claim for the necessity of traditional society" which was becoming popular again in the academy. "Within its shelter," he wrote, "the hum and buzz of implication can still be made out. Off-campus an age of enormity is in full riot and the roaring in the ears is bloody murder."

IN SUCH AN AGE the only way forward, Rosenfeld insisted, more forcefully than ever, was through the exploration of the self and its potential for autonomy and growth. One sees in the later criticism—of Hemingway, Faulkner, Orwell, Henry Green, Gandhi, Cahan, Simone Weil, Stendhal, Sartre, and others—a deepening of both the natural and moral perspective of inwardness, a more patient and radical effort to analyze literature, politics, and religion in terms of their life-giving or life-denying possibilities for the individual. In his literary criticism Rosenfeld continued to rely a good deal on the analysis of character—both of the personages and of the writer himself—as it reveals the writer's grasp of experience, but this too was carried on at a deeper level and with a more explicit attempt to explore the relationships that linked instinctual drives, strength of feeling, and force of values.

His main interest came to center in such figures as Gandhi and Tolstoy who had succeeded in transcending their limits by a sustained action of will, imagination, and feeling that carried them beyond the habits of their personalities into a new domain of personal freedom and power. In the achievement of "self-realization beyond the ego" he found the sources of Gandhi's triumph over politics along with his capacity for love and joy that had survived what seemed to be a crippling inner life. Judging by the opening section of a book on Tolstoy that he began writing in the early 1950's, Rosenfeld was embarking on a similar investigation of Tolstoy's style. He felt that the sources of the great Russian novelist's power over life and art derived from the continual encounters of a strong sexual nature and a no less strong religious one, which drove

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Tolstoy to fuse nature with morality in his work and, by-passing the struggles of the ego, to give himself up to his grasp of the great themes of existence. Similarly, he saw that Orwell's approaching death had had the effect of forcing the writer of *1984* to surrender his "life-long image, the character and style and habits of reason and restraint," and by the force of his passion and imagination to "express the totalitarian agony out of his own."

To acknowledge one's instinctual life, to educate the feelings, to be thoroughly on to one's self; to understand the moral "fall-out" of recent history—the small steady doses of heartlessness and untruth—and oppose its poisoning of the spirit by the force of one's desires and intelligence and hope—so Rosenfeld continued to live and to write. He found a positive example in Stendhal; a negative one in Hemingway; a mixed one in Faulkner, Sartre, Simone Weil. In his own fiction he was trying to break away from the large, symbolic design of Kafka and write about his own experience in the world in more immediately concrete ways. However, after 1952 his fiction, like his criticism, went slowly and fitfully. The rejection of *The Enemy* was a serious as well as bewildering setback and he was a long time recovering. He had not used his early success to armor himself against the possibilities of failure, and he remained an indifferent caretaker of his career. Also these were the years of "the fat gods," in Saul Bellow's phrase. It was not a period that Rosenfeld felt at home in, and he fought against it, as Bellow saw, trying to maintain his faith in "health, naturalism, the joy of love, the preservation of secular culture." According to Bellow, he paid the price in "boredom and deadness, despair, even madness."

BELLOW BELIEVES that he won in the end, and there is some indication of that in his writing. In the last year of his life he wrote his best piece of fiction—a story about a king, a rather nondescript and homely Jew, to whom both love and wisdom came easily. In his Solomon, Rosenfeld was able to create a character who embodied Feigenbaum's anguished assertion of ten years before—that "some men are capable of rising out of their own lives. . . . Their only secret is a tremendous willingness—they do not struggle with themselves." I suspect that the creator of both characters was approaching this much peace after the long passage that had lain between them. Similarly his last few reviews and articles have a simpler touch, an even more direct sense of the man who wished to write "so truthfully that only I, as I actually am, will appear on the page." However, Rosenfeld was an individual who, to use a phrase of Silone's he liked to quote, "was coming from far and going far," and there is little point in trying to determine which path he was on when he died.

He had left Minnesota after two years and was teaching adult education in Chicago when his life ended where it had begun: a death that came abruptly and found him alone. Otherwise, he died as he had lived—amid the disorder of provisional arrangements, manuscripts, and fresh plans. At the end of a piece on Chicago which he was just completing at the time, he advised the reader to look "for the everlasting in the ephemeral things":

> not in iron, stone, brick, concrete, steel, and chrome, but in paper, ink, pigment, sound, voice, gesture, and graceful leaping, for it is of such things that the ultimate realities, of the mind and heart, are made.

He was right. For this "luftmensch . . . with a thirst for water" produced the most enduring kind of criticism. His "ephemeral" book reviews offer, it seems to me, the most sustained example of the human use of literature in recent American letters. What "Isaac" did for his friends, they will continue to do for his readers: their humanity touches the spirit, restores us to our better selves, and makes us happy.

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DAN JACOBSON

AN APPRENTICESHIP—A Story

IT WAS ONLY FOR three or four years that David Palling and I were close friends; but when I look back now it sometimes seems that we shared our entire boyhoods. Season runs into season in the memory; and in all of them I see David's spare, loose figure, his bright red hair, his freckled face with its tiny nose and pale blue eyes; I hear his high-pitched voice, with its plaintive note when he spoke and its raucous note when he sang. He was a year or two younger than I was, but was of a height with me, and this seemed to wipe out the difference in our ages. Our elder brothers were friends, too; but their friendship was not nearly as close as ours. Being so many years older than David and I, they could not compete as openly and strenuously with one another as we could; they could not cry in front of each other as we were still able to; they tired more quickly of the games of backyard cricket that gave us so much pleasure; they could not laugh as hysterically as we could over puns, scraps of gibberish, the clothing of dandy Africans we passed in the streets, our own grimaces and postures.

Three or four years: how many enthusiasms, in those years? The breeding and racing of homing pigeons was a constant care, a constant, shared source of interest. But there were others, many others. Fruit-stealing was a recurring enthusiasm, every summer, when we—whose parents regularly brought home from the market place crates of grapes, apricots, peaches, plums, and figs; whose backyards were filled with unpruned trees that dropped their small, sweet fruit into a vinous litter at the foot of each trunk—would go out at night to denude the trees of all the suburban houses around ours. Through sandy, dusky lanes, where groups of chattering African servants gathered, we would make our way, until we came to a lane that was clear; then we scrambled over brick or iron fences and climbed into the rustling darkness of the trees; when any back door opened, or a light was switched on, or a voice was raised in challenge, we fled wildly, with pounding hearts, down the lanes, across the tarred, lit streets, into the stretches of unbuilt-upon veld that still lay between each group of houses. The bosoms of our shirts would be full of fruit; if the fruit was soft its juice would trickle down our chests and under our belts, as we ran; if it was hard and inedible we would, when we were safe, throw it at each other, or at street lamps, or give it to the bands of tattered piccanins who also roamed the streets and lanes of the town.

By daylight, during school holidays and over the weekends, we hunted lizards in the veld, mice in the outbuildings in our backyards; we organized elaborate foot and bicycle races; we built wire slides, and slid down them, hanging on for dear life to the piece of iron piping through which the wire was threaded; regularly we stole onions, potatoes, fat, and a frying pan from the kitchens of our houses, and went into the veld to fry potato chips over fires of grass and sticks. Our chips never came out of the pan crisp and brown; we always produced a coagulated, hot mass of stuff,

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black on the outside and white inside, which was sometimes so nauseating that we turned it over entirely to the piccanins who invariably gathered around us. No matter how isolated was the spot where we chose to do our cooking, these piccanins would appear; their eyes large and black, their shins frail, and their hands so toughened that they could scoop up the chips almost straight from the fire. We took their presence as much for granted as we did the rocks, grass, and thorn trees of the veld around us, and the gleam of iron roofs in the distance. On Saturday afternoons we went to the matinee at one of the town's three bioscopes, and lit cigarettes when the lights went out; we talked incessantly of girls, but did little about them, except to ride our bicycles round and round the house of this or the other girl whom we had chosen especially to admire; sometimes one of us would join the family of the other for a formal outing —a picnic by the river, a day trip to a farm, a visit to an open mine in the town.

I had a fantasy about the Palling family: I believed them to be "typical." I suppose the main reason why they appeared to me so typical was simply the fact that they were Gentiles and we were Jewish; it was from this difference that all other differences seemed to spring, more or less directly. It was not just that they celebrated Christmas and Easter, while we celebrated Passover and Yom Kippur. My parents spoke with a foreign accent; the Palling parents did not. Mr. Palling was in employment as the chartered secretary of the local branch of a building society; my father managed his own business. The Palling parents called each other "Mother" and "Father"; mine did not. Mr. Palling went every Sunday morning, in a white shirt, white flannel trousers, and a blazer, to play bowls at the local club; my father did not. The Pallings' house was always clean and orderly; ours was not. My parents discussed politics endlessly—local politics, Zionist politics, the war in Europe; the Palling parents never did. Our house was full of books and newspapers, and we were constantly going to the town library; the Pallings' house was altogether bare of reading matter. I and my brothers did well at school; the Palling boys did not. We argued with our parents; the Palling boys did not.

I would not have chosen to live without books or to do badly at school, or to be in fear of my father; but still, I deeply envied the Pallings their typicality, their apparent resemblance to all the families in books and newspaper advertisements. And I envied them because they seemed so much safer, so much more secure, than ourselves. The Palling boys did not have to read in the newspapers about the massacre of their fellow Jews in Europe; they did not have to protest against anti-Jewish remarks made by boorish schoolmasters or uglier things said in the playground by schoolboys; they did not have to bear the burden of guilt and sympathy toward the blacks which we bore as part of our Jewishness; they did not have to flinch inwardly when their parents mispronounced an English word.

How simple it was, it seemed to me, to have Mr. and Mrs. Palling for one's parents or to be Mr. and Mrs. Palling! Mr. Palling was on first-name terms with everyone on his street and all the teachers at school; his brow was untroubled, his chin was always beautifully shaven; polygonal, rimless glasses rested firmly on his little round nose; his expression was entirely innocent, even obtuse, except for the puckered, prim set of his mouth. (If it hadn't been for David's red hair, he would have been the image of his father, everyone said.) Mrs. Palling's face was more refined than her husband's: her nose and lips were thinner, her brow was wider, her cheeks were drawn in a little, always, as if in reflection. She was tall for a woman, as tall as her husband. She too seemed to be on first-name terms with all the housewives in the neighboring houses, and drank tea and smoked cigarettes with them in the mornings; in the afternoon

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she usually lay on one of the beds in the boys' bedroom, and smoked or dozed or simply stared up at the ceiling. Both she and her husband belonged not only to the bowls' club, but to numerous other organizations: the Sons of England (though they had both been born in South Africa); the Methodist Social Guild (though neither of them were great churchgoers); the Rotarians and the Rotary Anns. They did things which it was quite impossible for me to imagine my parents ever doing: they went dancing, they played cards, they held each other around the waist and called each other darling, they came home making jokes about how they had had too much to drink at Joe's or Betty's or Bill's or Bob's. They were typical, typical in every respect, I was sure; and how I coveted the peace and assurance which I was convinced their typicality must give them.

But my envy turned into something else when David and I were playing one day in the garage of the Pallings' house, and we overturned a box which contained in it, tied with red and blue ribbons, bundles of passionate letters that Mr. Palling had written twenty years before to the girl he was shortly to marry. I read only three or four of the letters before David, who had been busy reading from another bundle, snatched them shamefacedly and fiercely out of my hand, and threw them back into the box, together with the letters he had been reading. What he had read (and whether or not he ever went back to the box) I do not know; but those letters I had seen seemed to me altogether incredible, bizarre, even insane. In the letters Mr. Palling raved, he talked of salvation and damnation and despair, of the moon, the stars, her beauty, his unworthiness; he grovelled, he abased himself, he pleaded; he boasted wildly of "others"; he threatened to commit suicide. Mr. Palling! To Mrs. Palling! Was it possible? I could not imagine them any different from what they were as I knew them; and to my shocked, incredulous imagination it seemed that if he could have written to her like that, then any emotion was possible for anyone, anywhere. Was it typical to write to a woman of her breasts and arms, of prostrating yourself beneath the soles of her feet; typical to swear to her that if she did not yield you would leave her for others who would; typical to speak of that night, her voice, our love, our single heart? And was it typical, too, to conceal and contain these passions within an outward show of respectability, of total conventionality? Then there was no one in the world who was safe; then everyone lived among his own dangers.

But I did not realize what the reading of the letters had done to me until ten or twenty minutes later I went into the house with David, and at my first sight of his mother—who had received those letters, who must have written others like them—my mouth went quite dry and the air seemed to escape from my breast in a single shudder. I was in love with her. It was the last and most passionate enthusiasm I felt during my friendship with David; it was the one that he knew nothing about.

If I were forced to live my life again there are many things I would wish to be spared: among them is the dumb, hopeless lust of puberty and adolescence. Like most of the pains one endures, it is quickly forgotten, once it is over. Only in dreams do we sometimes recall it, in its intensity, shame, and ignorance; only in dreams are we ever so determinedly driven to an end that remains totally mysterious to us, even while we are driven toward it. I loved Mrs. Palling and I did not know what the word meant and could not say it to myself, let alone to anyone else; I could not do anything about the love I felt, except to watch Mrs. Palling, and to make as many occasions as I could for watching her. I could only urge David that we should play in his yard rather than my own; that we should play indoors rather than in the yard; that we should go into his room, where in the afternoons I knew his mother lay, resting.

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The room was always warm, summer and winter, for its windows got the afternoon sun. Yellow curtains were drawn across the windows, and the light that came through them was pale gold in color, and evenly diffused over the white walls and the black dressing-table and the patchwork counterpanes on the beds. Mrs. Palling lay on the bed furthest from the window, that of David's brother; she was always fully clothed, except for her shoes, which lay where she had kicked them off on the floor. On the chair to the side of the bed there was an ash tray, a packet of cigarettes, and her lighter. One arm lay alongside her body, the other was usually lifted; and the smoke from her cigarette, blue at the tip, gray and gold as it thinned and dispersed, rose slowly toward the ceiling. The dress she wore showed the outlines of her legs. In the room there was a warmth and dryness that my senses strained toward, hungered for, as I stood at the door, afraid to enter, unable to go. Dryness is the only word I have for what it was about her that made her seem so unendurably desirable to me. I was afraid I might fall or faint if I moved, if I spoke.

She spoke—sometimes drowsily, sometimes alertly, always in a friendly manner; she asked what we wanted or where we were going to play. At first I was filled with chagrin that she should have spoken to me in exactly the same way as she spoke to all David's other friends; later, even her indifference became a necessary part of her charm, her attraction for me. I longed for a word or a gesture from her to explain the mysteries which she so potently suggested to me; which I knew she had enacted; which I was sure, at times, must fill her imagination as obsessively as they did my own. But if I caught so much as a curious glance from her pale eyes I was filled with confusion and embarrassment: such a glance was enough to drive me back, away from the room.

It was only for those dazed moments in the bedroom that I now valued David's friendship; for no others. All the pursuits we had followed together seemed to have become thin, unprofitable, and boring; they had meaning only because they led me to or from the woman I loved. I looked down upon David, because he was so ignorant of what I felt; but, oddly enough, I felt no jealousy of Mr. Palling. Rather, I felt compassion toward him because he had suffered what I was now suffering; at the same time, I was grateful to him for having shown me what it was possible to feel toward his wife. It was to him that I owed the revelation of the length of her limbs, and the piercing dryness of her presence in the bedroom. It was to him, too, that I owed my pride at my own understanding when, "out of the blue" as everyone said, the Pallings' marriage suddenly broke up.

David announced to me one day, in the middle of a school term, that he and his brother were going to an aunt in Cape Town for a few weeks; then he burst into tears. When I reported this to my parents they exchanged an odd, wry, satisfied glance, and told me that there seemed to be some "trouble" between Mr. and Mrs. Palling, and that I should not make a nuisance of myself by going to their house. What the trouble was they would not tell me, but I soon found out all the same. Quite unexpectedly, Mr. Palling had walked out of the house and had gone to live with an Afrikaans woman in a rundown area on the other side of the town. The scandal was talked about for weeks, and we eventually learned all its details. Apparently, Mr. Palling had been seeing the other woman for months, some said for years. In her distress Mrs. Palling had sent the boys away to a sister of hers in Cape Town; but she continued to live alone in the house. She was begging her husband to come back; she tried to see him, she phoned him, she wrote him letters, but he remained obdurate, he swore he was never coming back.

I felt myself to be the only one in the

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neighborhood who was not shocked or surprised at the development; I had long known, ever since I had read those letters in the garage, that such things could happen, that anything could happen, to anyone. But I was also sure that there was no one in the neighborhood who could have been more deeply excited than myself over what had happened. Every morning on my way to school, when the sun still skulked behind trees and rooftops, I went out of my way to pass the Pallings' house; in the afternoons, on my way back from school, when the sun stood high over the town and its own heat sprang back at it from every pitched roof and flat road, I came past once again, more slowly. I lingered at the gate, looking into the garden I had once been able to cross, at the windows of rooms I had once been able to enter; when I reached the corner of the street I stopped and looked back, hoping that Mrs. Palling would come out. The thought of her alone in the house, in the bedroom, for me to speak to (I had not once spoken to her alone; always I had been with David when I had seen her) made me often walk back, if there was no one in the street to observe me, and stand once more at her gate.

One day I simply pushed the gate open. Never, in all my fruit-stealing expeditions with David, not even on the occasion when we had been caught and taken down to the police-station by an irate householder, had I felt such fear as I did when I found myself walking up the little gravel path of the garden. I felt that the sun was watching me; the house was listening to me; the path was ready to roar at me. As I walked I repeated over and over again to myself the question which was to be the pretext for my approach to Mrs. Palling: When was David coming back? When was David coming back? I gained the shade of the stoep, and rang the doorbell. Already, I was exhausted.

I heard the muted trill of the bell, and a little later the sound of footsteps in the hall; I saw a vague shape in the glass in the upper half of the door. But I could not step back. The door opened, and barely six inches away from me stood Mr. Palling. He was dressed in an athletic vest and a pair of trousers. His feet were bare.

I was so surprised that I could not speak, but simply stared forward at him. Somehow, the fact that on a weekday afternoon he should have been at home, instead of at work in his office, seemed to be as shocking as anything else in the situation. For a moment I don't think he recognized who I was; then, brusquely, he asked me what I wanted.

The shock of his appearance had driven my prepared question out of my head. Instead, I asked blankly after the woman I had come to see. "Where's Mrs. Palling?"

"She's gone. She's not coming back. Why do you want to know?" His expression was peevish; it seemed to me almost menacing. Before I could answer, I heard a woman's voice—not Mrs. Palling's—calling from inside the house, "Who is it?" Mr. Palling answered without turning his head. "A friend of David's." Then he added, staring directly at me, smiling without a trace of amiability, "My wife's admirer."

The shame I felt seemed to burn down to my toes. They knew! She had known, and had told him! I wanted to cry out that it wasn't true; but another impulse restrained me. I heard myself say, "You admired her too."

The blow that fell on my cheek was hard, but it did not hurt. I heard him shouting; vaguely, I ducked another blow, then turned and ran down the graveled path. At the gate he caught up with me, while I was struggling to open it. He shook me and hit me again; he almost threw me over the gate. But he could not shake out of me my gratitude to her, my exultation that my secret had been no secret at all to her, those past afternoons. His violence and rage could only prove that what I had begun to learn from her was indeed worth knowing, was worth living a lifetime to know.

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EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

THE GIFTED STUDENT & HIS ENEMIES

ONE OF THE MOST heavily emphasized themes in current discussions of education in the United States is the search for potential excellence. In the past we have tended to equate academic promise with high intelligence, and to infer that the most serious wastage of young people in school resulted from the school's failure to recognize and reward high academic aptitude in lower-status youngsters. The search for excellence, on these terms, became an extension of the traditional American quest for equality of opportunity, which served as its moral justification. But this defines the issue far too narrowly. Of perhaps more fundamental importance is the effect of the school on kinds of giftedness that may be useless or even disadvantageous in earning good grades and high recommendations in a typical high school milieu. High IQ and diligence do not exhaust the possibilities of superior capacity. Originality and insight, disciplined but impassioned sensitivity, and a highly personal and unique quality of mind contribute as indispensably to human achievement.

In the school, as in much of our society, creative youngsters seem usually to arouse a specific animus. Teachers dislike them, and the students learn quite early that the spontaneity and subjectivity they prize in themselves cannot be expected to lead to success in school or in later life.

What is the source of the animus, and why is the creative student so likely to encounter it? Particularly useful in answering these questions is a concept which, though explicitly introduced by Friedrich Nietzsche, has only recently had much impact on American social thought. This is the concept of *Ressentiment.** The word sounds like a French translation of "resentment," and this does approximate the meaning. But only imprecisely. *Ressentiment* is less completely conscious than resentment, and less focused on the particular real experiences that are its actual causes. In contrast, it is usually rationalized, covert, diffuse, and largely unconscious. Just as one may legitimately refer to "free-floating anxiety" as a decisive element in certain kinds of personality, *ressentiment* is a kind of free-floating ill-temper. It is the syndrome produced by intense hostility intensely repressed over long periods of time. As such, it is familiar enough. Why then is it worth discussing as a *social*, rather than a psychological, disorder? Because of the peculiar and devastating ways in which *ressentiment* has become institutionalized in 20th-century mass culture.

The conditions of contemporary life

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* Max Scheler's *Ressentiment* (Lewis A. Coser, Ed., Free Press, 1961) is the authoritative statement and exegesis of the meaning of *ressentiment*.

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have reified *ressentiment* into a massive social and political reality. The operation of democratic political institutions—and especially their underlying egalitarian value assumptions—has greatly increased the political influence of the most *ressentient* social groups while weakening the will of more affirmative individuals to resist them.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS one of the social institutions most strongly affected by *ressentiment*. The public schools attract, as teachers, administrators, and counselors, individuals from groups in the population that are particularly subject to it, and for reasons which are likely to influence the selection of the more *ressentient* from among such groups. The school is the traditional avenue—and arena—for social mobility, which many of its clientele appear to conceive as its sole *raison d'être;* one goes to school in order to get ahead, or one drops out; few youngsters are held in school by any real commitment to the cultural values represented by education, and few public schools in fact represent those values adequately. But those who are most anxious about social mobility are also most likely to be *ressentient*.

Those social groups are most prone to *ressentiment* whose members are especially subjected to frustration in their position in life, but who feel so impotent that they do not dare to get consciously angry and rebel and hit back, or strike out for themselves against the actual source of their frustration. Generally, they dare not even recognize it. Instead they identify with and accommodate to the very individuals or social forces undermining their position, and whose strength they tend to admire and exaggerate. By thus exercising their impotence, they increase it; what a less threatened individual would have felt as rage becomes resentment, then a kind of small-shopkeeper's fearful and self-pitying distrust, and finally, perhaps, merely an unconscious predisposition to sanctimonious spitefulness.

Ressentiment therefore ravages most seriously the rootless lower-middle or white-collar classes who give up most in order to be respectable and get least real deference and security in return. The threat to them is much more serious now that Western life permits its lower-level personnel to develop so few real skills. Yet, they cannot attack the system that has made their lives meaningless, for they are in collusion with it and want to rise within it.

It is not merely the economic threat that leads to *ressentiment,* for *ressentiment* is not simply anxiety. The *ressentient*, rather, are those who have given up important human potentialities in making deals with the system, and are now faced with mounting evidence that this is not going to pay off. Thus the German inflation of the 20's, wiping out the savings of millions of petty bourgeois who for a lifetime had slaved to confuse thrift and order with decency, helped pave the way to Nazism, which epitomized *ressentiment* in its Eichmannesque combination of sadism and alienation. The essence of the Nazi position, after all, is that its motives were worthy of the highest traditions of the civil service; one likes to think that the executioners of Joan of Arc, by comparison, at least felt that there was something cheerful about a nice fire. Even hatred is too strong an emotion for the highly authoritarian, who can handle feeling only by bureaucratizing it, so that it emerges as prejudice against classes of individuals rather than open hostility. Good authoritarians never get personal.

But the rigidity, hostility, and alienation that reveal the authoritarian personality in face-to-face relationships are not peculiar to adherents of the political far right. In the presence of the doctrinaire young liberal, the professional Negro or Zionist, the militant opponent of atomic warfare, one often senses the existence of the same animus however strongly one may agree with their views. It does not seem to matter very much—it does matter

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somewhat—whether humanitarian issues are themselves a central part of the ideology. The aggressively poor young college instructor, flaunting his radical views, minority status, and undisciplined children as explanations of his lack of recognition and status, is no fascist. But he does seem to run on the same fuel. Such a person, feeling helpless to begin with, becomes frightened lest his resentment provoke further punishment, and rationalizes it as a more positive emotion: Christian love, the desire to protect the weak, or to secure social justice. All these are perfectly real emotions that may and do arise as spontaneous responses to real human experiences. It is perfectly possible to wish, through love or compassion, to help a suffering fellow being, whether the cause of his misery be poverty, disease, sheer misfortune, or any combination of evils. It is likewise possible to be moved by his plight to genuine and fierce anger at the persons or circumstances that have brought it about, and to commit oneself wholeheartedly to fight the good fight on his behalf. But this is a very different attitude, and expresses a very different character, from that represented by *ressentiment*—which prizes the victim *because* he is a victim, and loves the suffering while covertly exploiting the sufferer.

No one has expressed this difference more clearly, or evaluated it more precisely, than Thoreau in the following passage from *Walden:*

> I would not subtract anything from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their lives and works are a blessing to mankind . . . I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavour our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious. This is a charity that hides a multitude of sins. The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own castoff griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our despair, our health and ease, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by contagion. From what southern plains comes up the voice of wailing? Under what latitudes reside the heathen to whom we would send light? Who is that intemperate and brutal man whom we would redeem? . . .
>
> I believe that what so saddens the reformer is not his sympathy with his fellows in distress, but, though he be the holiest son of God, his private ail. Let this be righted, let the spring come to him, the morning rise over his couch, and he will forsake his generous companions without apology. . . . There is nowhere recorded a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God. . . . All health and success does me good, however far off and withdrawn it may appear; all disease and failure helps to make me sad and does me evil, however much sympathy it may have with me or I with it. . . . Do not stay to be an overseer of the poor, but endeavour to become one of the worthies of the world.

IN THE CONTEMPORARY American high school, *ressentiment* is much more effectively institutionalized in its "philanthropic" than in its authoritarian form. Individual teachers and administrators representing either tendency are common, but one way of expressing a major change in the climate of American education over the past half-century is by saying that authoritarianism has been placed in a thoroughly defensive position, while the "philanthropic" attitude has become dominant.*

Teachers and administrative officials of schools come primarily from lower-middle class backgrounds. Many come from families of somewhat higher status, but the folkways of the schools are lower-middle class folkways: the official language, the customs and regulations gov-

* The shift from "traditional" to "emergent" values in the schools discussed by George P. Spindler in his classic paper, "Education in a Transforming American Culture" (*Harvard Educational Review,* Summer 1955) might be expressed with equal validity as a shift from the dominance of authoritarian to "philanthropic" modes of *ressentiment.*

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erning dress—even the food in the school cafeteria. All these tend to be shabby-genteel. They are not forthright expressions of the actual limitations of the schools' financial, intellectual, and social resources, such as peasant life and art express, but cheap reproductions of corporate or academic life, as imperfectly conceived. Schoolteachers by and large have likewise notably resisted, even more than most white-collar workers, identifying with the working class in their own financial interests, as by unionization. One may, of course, dislike joining a union and refuse to do so on a variety of grounds from social ideology to personal taste. But the actual circumstances of the public school teacher's background and vocational life make union membership a promising device for achieving his legitimate economic aspirations. The difficulty seems to be that teachers' economic aspirations are regularly subordinated by their middle-class identifications. Unionization is inconsistent with their insistence that they practice a profession. Fully established professions, like medicine and law, have of course evolved militant organizations to advance and safeguard their economic interests, though these are not called unions. But teachers have not so far created any organization suited to the purpose of direct economic action on their behalf.* The life-style of the public high school teacher remains, characteristically, that of the dutiful subordinate awaiting preferment in a niggardly bureaucratic structure.

Such a life is the very breeding ground of *ressentiment*. The teacher is linked to his principal, his superintendent, and his peers by a pretense of professional equality that prevents him from either demanding the perquisites of status or the liberty to scoff at it. Within a bureaucratic structure in which one depends not merely for advancement but for personal gratification as well on the endorsement of one's peers and subordinates, open conflict generates intolerable anxiety. Frustration and anger degenerate into malicious gossip, and are absorbed into the general ambience of wariness and cynicism. Ultimately, the consequence is alienation; in such people there is no longer direct connection between their actual experiences, their feelings, and their actions.

NOTHING ABOUT THIS is peculiar to the career of teachers in contemporary America; this is rather the familiar catalogue of complaint about life in the organized system. *Ressentiment* probably is less prominent among teachers than among many social groups like waiters or cab drivers, whose work keeps them in constant contact with people visibly enjoying a higher standard of life than they can achieve in a culture that makes it impossible to take pride in performing personal service well—or like social workers, whose "philanthropic" enterprise puts them in a position of unparalleled opportunity to intervene in the lives of other people whose poverty and tendency to act out conflicts make them both particularly tempting and particularly vulnerable to the *ressentient*. And there are many other social groups in which *ressentiment* has become institutionalized under somewhat different conditions: yellow journalism and the pornography of violence, for example. But there are further reasons that are peculiar to the education establishment why the public high school should be the locus of strong *ressentiment*.

The official function of the schoolteacher is still defined in academic and intellectual terms, however irrelevant the definition may be to the daily work a teacher in a slum school actually does. And in academic and intellectual terms, the public secondary school teacher is inferior. This, moreover, is a fact he must consciously face. The elementary school teacher can avoid facing it— if indeed it

* See Myron Lieberman, *Education as a Profession* (Prentice-Hall, 1956) especially chapters 9 and 10. A teachers' union, of course, is again very much in controversy.

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is a relevant judgment to apply to her—because she is not graded in her professional training in direct competition with people who are going into other work. In other words, she is likely to be—in many states she virtually has to be—an "ed major." High school teachers are not; they are math majors or English majors or history majors and, generally speaking, they are the ones who made poorer grades than those who head into industry, the professions, or higher education on the basis of their specialized study. In graduate school such direct comparisons are again inapplicable, but the norms for graduate students in education on standardized intelligence tests (like the Miller Analogies) are substantially lower than those for graduate students in other academic disciplines.

Students are forced into secondary school teaching because they are not able to make the grade in a specialized or scholarly discipline. Finding themselves comparatively impotent academically, they are unwilling to relinquish respectable intellectual pretensions altogether, and settle for something that, in their own view, is decidedly second-rate. It is perfectly possible, of course, to define the function of a high school teacher as an honorable and extremely significant specialty in its own right; and it is also perfectly possible that, if it were so defined, it would have a rather low correlation with conventional academic and intellectual achievement. If high school teaching *were* so defined, the people who go into it would not have a sense of partial failure, and there would be no reason for their academic situation to lead to *ressentiment*. Certainly, neither the early-childhood nor the primary grade school teacher seems so prone to it. The public image of such a teacher as a constricted and punitive spinster has disappeared—though, as usual, more slowly than the reality—to be replaced by the image of the young woman who thinks of herself as, and very often really is, a professional emissary to the private world of childhood. She may not be especially scholarly or analytical-minded, but she knows her job and does it well. The children know that she does; and there is a good deal of mutual respect and affection.

IN THE LATER GRADES and in junior high and high schools the situation is much worse.* Subject matter has begun to matter, and so has the fact that the teacher is often incompetent to handle it. There is more to this incompetence than relative ignorance or stupidity. There is also the fact that the school has begun to deal with controversial content and controversial purposes. High school civics, social studies, and biology courses are no place for people who do not know their history, economics, or biology. But they are also not the place for timid or insecure people, for people who are especially anxious to make a good impression on the community or to keep out of trouble. These are, of course, exactly the kinds of people that a principal or superintendent who is timid or insecure himself will try to keep there.

Again, in this context, the feeble persistence of identification with academic norms contributes to the high school teacher's *ressentiment*. The identification is not strong enough to make him a hero.† But it is strong enough to make him ashamed of himself, and to add to his feeling of impotence. His impotence is real enough; he generally just does not *know* enough to defend an unpopular position on scholarly grounds even it he had the courage. But until he abandons the professional stance, or ceases to link it to academic compe-

* See Martin Mayer, *The Schools* (Harper, 1961) for an excellent treatment of observations dealing with this point.

† Not, to be sure, that college and university people, in the social sciences at least, behaved particularly heroically under pressure. See Paul Lazarsfeld and W. Thielens, *The Academic Mind* (Free Press, 1958) for a canny account of the extent of accommodation, from widespread self-censorship to occasional outright betrayal of colleagues, that occurred during McCarthy's dreadful reign.

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tence, he cannot accept himself as a part of the local propaganda apparatus either. The statement "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" is quite false; knowledge can be a dreadful burden. But like pregnancy, knowledge to a teacher is a form of commitment no longer subject to voluntary abridgment without a sense of catastrophic guilt, and to have only a little is no help at all.

I have stated that the most serious consequence of *ressentiment* is alienation. The *ressentient* individual loses the connection between his feelings and the situation in which he is actually living. His emotions, and even his perceptions of reality, are channelled in the directions that cause least anxiety rather than toward the experiences that actually arouse them, either in the past or in the immediate present. All neurosis, of course, has this effect, but *ressentiment* is especially effective because it is the emotion itself—anger, rage, impotence, and fear of retribution—that is the source of anxiety and that must be repressed. So *ressentient* individuals are especially clumsy and insensitive, in contrast to those with other sorts of neurotic difficulty, in using their feelings to help them understand the meaning of their lives and to discipline their moral conduct. This is why they become sentimental; they prefer fake experiences that decorate the actual situation to symbolic evocations of its actuality. This kind of sentimentality has become a negative status symbol, evoking the atmosphere of lower-middle class life as surely as a whiff of H_2S brings back freshman chemistry: the plastic flowers in the apartment house lobby, which insist that this is a place in the sun; the conventional cuteness of the mass-produced, mock-hostile office signs and mock-boastful chef's aprons. The worst thing that could happen, obviously, is that a genius really should be at work.

What happens when one is—even an embryonic one? The essential quality of the creative student, as he is beginning to be defined in the literature, is that his thought is divergent. He doesn't arrive at right answers by deducing them from established premises, but by an intuitive understanding of how the problem he is dealing with really works, of what actually goes into it, and the right answers he arrives at may not be right in the textbook; they will not be, if the textbook has been carefully edited to make it as widely acceptable as possible. He works hard when the problem requires it, and respects facts as a part of reality. But for the creative student, facts are not right answers but tools and components for building original solutions.

HOW WILL THE high school teacher react to this? If he is a high school teacher because the job gives him joy, and is competent intellectually, with astonished delight. But to the degree that he is *ressentient,* with defensive hostility. Consider the poor mathematician, who manages to salvage enough math to become a high school teacher, or the ninth-grade teacher who hates mathematics and never meant to have any traffic with it at all. Such teachers manage by knowing a set of answers, and a conventional procedure for arriving at them. They maintain their self-esteem by convincing themselves that this is really enough; and the student who really understands mathematics puts them in a dilemma. On the one hand, he may show them up as incompetent. On the other, they don't know but that he may be cheating somehow, and laughing at them for being taken in. They dare not commit themselves either way. If they are authoritarian, they bully him into solving the problems "the way I show you as long as you are in my class." If they are "philanthropic," they respond with studied tolerance and amusement to Johnny's "attention-getting behavior." But in either case they try to make sure that he doesn't embarrass them again by actually getting up and doing mathematics in front of the whole class.

In the humanities the creative student

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is both more threatening and more vulnerable. He is more vulnerable because there aren't any right answers to support him. He is more threatening because the humanities, if truthfully handled, are themselves threatening to the *ressentient*. It is the job of the humanities to get to the root of human experience, which at best means hewing austere beauty out of some very ugly blocks in such a way that their real character is revealed. This is just what the alienated cannot tolerate. What happens to the adolescent boy or girl who writes a theme about an experience that had deep meaning for him—at this age it will probably be in part a sexual experience—as it really was? For that matter, how does the well-indoctrinated professional educator, suffused with the benign values underlying his course in child development and his belief in the wholesomeness of family living, handle either Medea or Salome?

The position of the social science teacher is more ambiguous. *Ressentiment* is not always such a handicap in the social sciences, which provide a superb eminence from which to look down on one's neighbors while discharging one's scholarly obligations. The convention of objectivity keeps the *ressentient* social scientist from having to face the full responsibility for his hostility and destructiveness; after all, he is just doing his job. The creative student in social studies may therefore get an additional chance. Besides the possibility common to all fields of encountering a superior, *ressentiment*-free instructor, there is the possibility in social studies of finding an instructor who does not clobber the creative even though he is *ressentient,* but identifies with their undisciplined or rebellious disjunctivity and accepts and encourages it as an expression of his own *ressentiment*—taking refuge in academic freedom and his obligation to the truth if detected.

But such teachers are inevitably rare; they are selected out in the process of teacher-training, which requires the candidate to suffer a great deal of nonsense without protest; and administrators get rid of them if they find them out in time as likely to get the school in trouble with intransigent groups in the community. The creative student is far less likely to encounter a social critic on the high school staff than he is teachers with whom he will quickly establish a mutual loathing and who are continually reminded by his freshness of perception that they have consented to devote their lives to teaching what they know to be false or irrelevant; to denying in class that the fundamental experiences of his life can even have occurred. Hundreds of high school teachers can, and do, spend several hours a day trying to teach slum children in civics courses the official syllabus on the American Way of Life. If the children are creative, the questions they raise are difficult to answer, especially after they have given up trying to ask them verbally, and express them directly through their attitudes and behavior in class. One gets used to it, in time, and learns to maintain order. But the job of an assistant warden in a custodial institution is a long step down from earlier expectations.

OVERLYING THE SPECIAL influence of *ressentiment* on instruction in the separate fields of knowledge and reinforcing its effects is the "philanthropic" ideology of the school. Students, by definition, are subordinate in status to their schoolmasters; they are in a partially dependent position, and the function of the school is to nurture them. It is appropriate that the school devote itself to their needs and attend to and utilize their interests. Its primary purpose is to serve them.

But an institution designed to nurture the relatively weak and dependent presumably does so because it cherishes their potential strength and autonomy. There would be good reason for it to value most highly those youngsters who show most intellectual vigor and originality in the disciplined handling of ideas; as, in some

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cultures, a father will love his strongest and most virile sons most even though he fears them a little. The *ressentient,* identifying with impotence and resentful of strength, respond very differently. The school, strongly influenced by *ressentiment,* is rather inclined to cherish the weakness of the weak.

Thus one notion that even very poor students of educational sociology grasp eagerly is that schools are generally biased against lower-class students. They certainly are, and this is an important truth. But when the proposition is explored, what it seems to mean in the professional curriculum of education is that middle-class students "have advantages" which they ought to be forced to share more generously. The remedy is to insure that the lower-status students get their share of good grades, scholarships, opportunity for social leadership, and so on.

But these are still conceived almost wholly in middle-class terms. There is no corresponding respect for the lower-status child's own experience of life, his language, and the forms of social organization he spontaneously adopts. It is true enough that the school faces a difficult dilemma; lower-class behavior creates real difficulties in running a formal social organization like a school, quite apart from any question of bias; yet the bias is real and harmful. But professional education both in its curriculum and in its practice tends to respond to the bias as if the chief objection to it was that it gave the privileged too many privileges, rather than with a real, imaginative concern for the quality of life of lower-status youngsters.

This is a major reason why the bias is hard to eliminate. Its most important consequences do not occur in the schools, but in the long run. Giving the children of Southern Negro migrants more high grades even if they don't read or do arithmetic very well is not really going to help them much in getting into medical school. What is needed is something like the original conception of progressive education, which combined an extremely flexible conception of both educational content and instructional technique with a rather rigid adherence to standards of achievement. This is *genuine* acceptance of the meaning of underprivileged life, and real help in mobilizing the youngster's real strengths to either pull himself out of it or learn to live it more richly, at his own choice. Pushed to extremes, this might mean letting the younger brother of the leader of a "retreatist" gang use the backyard marijuana plot as his project in arithmetic and biology, thus utilizing his need for status in the peer group. But what is far more important, it also means giving him an "A" if—and only if—he solves his problems of cultivation, processing, and marketing in such a way as to show high competence in arithmetic and biology—and an "F" if he lets his marijuana go to pot.

SO TOUGH-MINDED A philosophy has, in fact, rather less chance than marijuana itself of taking root in the emotional climate of the American public school. "Philanthropically" inverted, the "emergent" attenuation of progressive education abandons the controversial undertaking of dealing realistically with the experiences of lower-class life. Then, to make up for not taking these children seriously, the school tries to equalize their position by expecting less of them. Simultaneously, it prevents them from learning what they are missing by inflating its credentials and subtly derogating the quest for distinction.

Higher-status children also are discriminated against in the public school, if they attempt to live in school as they do at home and in their social life. They do not share the lower-status youngster's difficulty in earning high grades and scholarships; and they are usually adept enough socially to dominate the extracurriculum despite the attempts of the school to democratize it, especially if such attempts are enfeebled by the school ad-

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ministration's fear of parents' possible political influence. So the discrimination higher-status youngsters encounter is not comparable in kind to that experienced by the lower-status pupils. But as indications of *ressentiment,* the forms its takes are significant, and are especially likely to stultify creativity. Any mode of expression that is highly individualized, extravagant, or overtly sensual is forbidden or discouraged. It is assumed that it is better for the school dance to be one that everyone can afford than one with an especially good band and refreshments; that boys and girls whom nature has provided, for the time being, with especially splendid bodies ought not to be allowed to dress in such a way as to derive any special advantage from them; that the illumination of the school grounds, if there are any, be such as to discourage courtship rather than to suggest the exquisite delights to which nature may be encouraged.

Adolescence is a time when highly individualized, extravagant, and overtly sensual modes of behavior do crop out, despite the position the school takes toward them. But by its disparagement, the school abandons its opportunity to help youngsters create a style suited to their romantic age. The essential first step in encouraging creativity in secondary school youngsters is surely to link their new sexual energy and their occasionally flamboyant quest for identity to meaningful larger aspects of present and past culture, which is what taste means and disciplined self-expression requires. If the baroque manifestations of adolescence instead elicit an attitude of sulky oppression, the adolescents are thrown back onto resources they have not yet developed. The twist may then be as far as they can get by themselves in the face of official disapproval. Moreover, the ideology of the school grudgingly supports the numerous *ressentient,* lower-middle class youth against the more creative within the youth-culture itself. The school thereby tips the balance in favor of the "teen-age" solution to the problem of adolescence, quietly maintaining support for the unassuming, undiscriminating boy or girl who sees things the way other sensible people do and with other "teen-agers" builds a conventional social group, accepting conventional discipline for occasional stereotyped "teen-age" misbehavior within it. The youngster who is most handicapped by this situation is not the delinquent or the rebel, for both of these are conventional adolescent roles in their own way which society endorses by punishment. It is the innovator who sees things freshly and differently. One does not punish this youngster formally; for to do this would be to admit that he was there and that what he had said was intelligible. Instead, one isolates him by denying him the customary sources of status—that is, recognition for his work and point of view. Then one helps him—helps him to become assimilated within the "teen-age" group. In a little while, it is as if he had never been.

THE "PHILANTHROPIC" REFUSAL to allow excellence to get above itself is not limited to areas, like the fine arts, toward which lower-middle class American culture is generally hostile or suspicious. Within the school even those forms of distinction that are commonly supported within this culture are treated ambiguously. I suspect *ressentiment* is one factor in the continued, and now apparently rising, complaint about overemphasis on athletics in the school. There is a substantial basis for the complaint in many schools, for athletics is sometimes the only activity that is taken seriously at all. But conversely, athletics is sometimes the only activity that is at all serious, and in which any distinction of style or achievement is permitted or recognized. The clue to whether *ressentiment* is at the root of the complaint lies in the terms in which it is couched. Complaints that the emphasis on and preoccupation with athletics interferes with specific aspects of

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the academic program are serious and legitimate. What are highly suspect, however, are complaints that the emphasis on athletics allows the athletes to become an elite group and gain favor and eminence unavailable to their less glamorous colleagues. Before considering such protests, one would like to be certain that the history teacher encourages a brilliant and resourceful analysis of American foreign policy with as much joy—and technical assistance—as the basketball coach does brilliant and resourceful playmaking and backcourt work (for these are not inherently glamorous). It is possible that students respect an elite of athletes because good athletes are encouraged to be proud of themselves for being as good as they can, and that these are the only people left on campus with anything in particular to be proud of.

Among the most important educational consequences of *ressentiment,* then, are failure to recognize the gifted, or to nurture their gifts when discovered; differential drop-out rates among students from different social classes; and fundamental difficulties in curriculum construction that vitiate earnest and costly efforts to adapt the curriculum to the needs of divergent individuals or social groups. *Ressentiment* also influences the total experience of education in ways that are so general that they can hardly even be recognized as problems: the flavor of education itself; whether students will come to think of it as opening their understanding to a wider and deeper range of experiences or as constricting and limiting their range of possible emotional and intellectual response; whether, in the long run, the school tends more to liberate than to alienate. The total social function of education is intimately involved with *ressentiment;* for the secondary school has both a cautionary and a mithridatic function. It is here that one learns to avoid the expression of noble or heroic aspirations in noble or heroic terms, so as not to destroy at the outset the chance that they may be realized. Conversely, it is here that one learns to tolerate without surrender the demands of guilt and humility; to retain, in some measure, the power to continue to enjoy privileges and personal achievements without being disconcerted by the envy they arouse. Now that the differences are neither clearly indicated nor morally defended, many Americans devote their lives to an effort to steal into the first-class compartment without awakening the tourist passengers; and the school is where one first learns how numerous and viligant they are. The school is where you learn to be an American; and an important part of Americanism is to learn the prevailing norms and limits of achievement and self-assertion and how to maintain them against the encroachments of a mass society that the moral support of a strong egalitarian tradition has made extremely aggressive.

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The Science of Thought Control

SELMA FRAIBERG

THE EVENTS OF the past thirty years have created a kind of monstrous laboratory for the study of the enslavement of the human ego. The Moscow Trials confronted us with the spectacle of a man who had been brought into morbid alliance with his own persecutors, a man who confessed to crimes he had never committed, professed beliefs that negated his own history, and held "truths" that contradicted the evidence of his own senses. In an ecstasy of self-abomination many of these accused men demanded the extreme penalty from their judges. Later, we learned through Hitler's concentration camps that systematic terror and degradation can strip personality to its naked foundations, that hunger and extreme peril can enslave a man to his persecutors, and that when the work of enslavement is completed the rags of personality can be made over so that a man finally comes to resemble his own jailers.

It was the Chinese Communists who gave us the term "brainwashing" and demonstrated through the conversion of Western civilians and prisoners of war that their methods of thought reform were not to be conceived of as a kind of black magic practiced by totalitarian regimes upon passive and enslaved citizens. The reports of our own repatriated prisoners of war collapsed a whole body of popular theories. We were without any explanation for the fact that a man born to freedom and reared in a democratic creed should surrender a part of his mind to his enemy. Official and public reaction was, in itself, without precedent in history. There were no denunciations of the converts and the collaborators as traitors, or any public demonstrations against them. They were visited by psychiatric teams appointed by their government, and brought back as mentally afflicted men.

Once again, we have learned that freedom of thought is not alone a human right conferred upon a man by his government and guaranteed by its laws. The ultimate guarantees of freedom are invested in the human ego. As the pragmatic psychology of tyranny has known for centuries, there are conditions under which the ego will surrender its autonomy. The methods for enslaving the ego and even the methods of "thought reform" are not entirely new. But we are the first generation in history to acquire a scientific psychology of tyranny and mental enslavement. We can now begin to understand the process of mental enslavement, and the morbid attachment of a man for his persecutors. With this knowledge we shall not banish devils from the human scene; but for those who find cold comfort in scientific revelation, these investigations of contemporary psychology afford a considerable advance over the modern demonology that has invaded so much of our thinking about mental enslavement.

* * *

Among the most brilliant and illuminating contributions to our understanding of the psychology of mental enslavement are Bruno Bettelheim's studies of individual and mass behavior in the concentration camp society. Before being imprisoned in 1938–39 at Dachau and Buchenwald, Bettelheim had

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undergone a personal analysis and had already become interested in psychoanalytic research and applied psychoanalysis. Under the early impact of imprisonment in Dachau, Bettelheim began to experience changes in his own personality, and to protect himself against the danger of disintegration which he saw among his fellow inmates, he undertook to employ his psychological knowledge in a strict analysis of his own behavior and that of his fellow prisoners and the guards and SS men in the concentration camp community. By such means he was able to preserve his personality from destruction and achieve a kind of autonomy in an environment that had, as its calculated aim, the complete subjugation of the individual and the annihilation of the individual will.

Some years after his release and his immigration to the United States, Bettelheim gathered together his observations in a study called "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations."* This study with some modifications forms the center of a new work, *The Informed Heart*,† in which he addresses himself to the problem of autonomy and submission in contemporary society.

According to Bettelheim, the war against the human spirit within the camps was not a matter of a grand-scale unleashing of sadism, but a policy deliberately aimed at creating the docile and enslaved personality. Moreover, this destruction was carefully carried out in a series of stages.** The first stage Bettelheim refers to as "traumatization," a massive assault upon the personality and the body which, in psychological terms, paralyzes the ego and lays the groundwork for drastic personality changes. A kind of ritual initiation took place during the transport to camp, when the prisoners were exposed to almost constant physical and mental torture. Suffering may unite men through identification with each other, but the Gestapo made sure that this could not happen. No prisoner was allowed to care for his own or another's wounds. Prisoners were forced to hit one another, to accuse themselves and others of vile actions, to curse their religion, to denounce their wives as adulteresses and prostitutes. Any failure to obey the orders to hit and to vilify, or any help given a tortured prisoner, was swiftly punished by death.

THIS "INITIATION"—whose purpose, of course, was to break the prisoner's resistance to changing his external forms of behavior, as a preliminary stage in breaking his resistance to internal personality changes—usually lasted for about twelve hours, often longer. The real world was transformed into a nightmare, and the only possible way in which the ego could deal with this was to make the new reality "not real," to experience it as if it were happening to someone else. This "denial of reality," Bettelheim points out, was a first step in developing new psychological mechanisms for survival in the camp, a necessary adaptation to overwhelming experiences, but one that already signified a major personality change.

Upon entering the camp, the prisoner became a number, and not only in a metaphorical sense. Thereafter the camp officials addressed him by his number; and the prisoner was compelled to refer to himself by number and not by name. Thus the very symbol of personal identity, one's name, began to lose its connections with the personality, and with the body, and the stranger taking over from within acquired the absolute anonymity of the serial number.

The extent to which this had the effect of reducing the prisoner to the helplessness of childhood may be seen in one example among many that Bettelheim gives. Permission had to be sought from the guards to use the latrines: "Jewish prisoner number 34567 most obediently prays to be permitted to ———." To complete the degradation many guards withheld permission, or asked baiting questions to further humiliate the prisoner. If permission was granted, the prisoner was required to report back later (using the same formula). Here, it was as if the man were reduced to the state of earliest childhood, and the training for cleanliness repeated once again.

The constant threats of lashings from the guards served further to undermine a man's image of himself as a man; they were like

* *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, October 1943.

† Free Press, 309 pp., $5.00.

** We must remember that Bettelheim is describing the concentration camps of 1939 and 1940 which at that time were largely for the internment of political prisoners. The extermination camps did not come into existence until a later date.

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the threats of punishment in childhood. Even the work assigned to prisoners was often nonsensical and childish: for example, a prisoner (especially if he was new) might be required to carry heavy rocks from one place to another and then pick them up and carry them back.

The impotent rage of the prisoner was another factor in his reduction to a condition of pure submissiveness. For there was nothing to do with this rage except turn it back upon the self or project it onto a suitable object. Fear of one's own internalized rage, fear of its destructive power, produced a feeling not unlike that of childhood, of being helpless before an internal danger, the danger of one's own impulses. Bettelheim shows how this internalized rage played an important role in the submission to the SS. The power of the objectively real danger represented by the SS man was augmented in the destructive fantasies of the prisoner, so that the SS man grew omnipotent in the eyes of the prisoner and the prisoner became more submissive out of the magnitude of the danger. A fair proportion of the internalized aggression built up in all prisoners was also discharged in endless, petty quarrels among themselves, like the quarreling of children. How could it be otherwise? Yet such petty warfare among the prisoners worked once again against any group cohesion or support for disintegrating personalities, and consequently only served the purposes of the Gestapo psychological program.

The prisoner soon learned that there was no possibility of asserting his individual will or influencing his environment through his own actions. As in a nightmare, there was unremitting horror—bleak timelessness and no hope of deliverance. No man was ever permitted to believe that he might some day be released. And as a monstrous symbol of death and the eternity of this hell, no clocks nor watches were permitted the prisoners. There remained one last freedom: the choice to live or die.

The problem, as Bettelheim puts it, was how to survive as a man, not a walking corpse, "as a debased and degraded but still human being." To react emotionally to the torture or abuse or death of a comrade was suicidal. Yet, to preserve his humanity in the concentration camp a man had somehow to find a way of keeping alive his inner feelings even though he could not act upon them.

> Those persons who blocked out neither heart nor reason—neither feelings nor perception, but kept informed of their inner attitudes even when they could hardly ever afford to act on them, those prisoners survived and came to understand the conditions they lived under. They also came to realize what they had not perceived before; that they still retained the last, if not the greatest, of the human freedoms: to choose their own attitude under any given circumstances.

Those who were unable to do this ended by becoming empty of human feeling, and shameless in their degradation. Finally, many of them came to resemble their jailers. Old prisoners, it could be observed, modeled themselves on the SS, taking over their methods of handling traitors within the group and outdoing the SS in cruelty and torture. They scavenged for old pieces of SS uniforms, or tried to sew and mend their prison garb to resemble the uniforms. They took pride in producing at roll-call the snappy SS salute, standing rigidly at attention. And there was a terrible irony in the taking over by the prisoners of a favorite SS game, the object of which was to determine who could stand being hit the longest without uttering a complaint.

The remaking of a man in the image of his enemy is a highly complex psychological process. Bettelheim makes it clear that we are to understand this pathological identification as a primitive type of defense, an attempt to protect the ego against a great and overwhelming danger. "Like the child who identifies with the parent, this identification helped prisoners to know intuitively what the SS expected of them." Such knowledge, and the behavior based on it, may often have saved a prisoner's life. But the price he paid was the altering of his own personality into the very type of person the SS was trying to produce.

II

IF WE SET ASIDE our revulsion at the idea of a man who makes himself over into the image of his persecutor, there is much to be learned from such behavior. Let me, in the following remarks (which are strictly my own, and not in any

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way Bettelheim's), attempt a brief sketch of the psychology of the process.

The fear of ego extinction, loss of the self, is one of the primordial fears of mankind. Whether the threat of dissolution comes from within (as in psychosis) or from without (as in the concentration camp), the ego characteristically falls back upon its earliest and most primitive defenses—the very ones, in fact, that were first employed in childhood development to guard the emerging ego against extinction. Among the most important of these is the mechanism of "identification." Before a self emerges in infancy there is an undifferentiated oneness with the mother, a state of relative freedom from tension as long as needs are satisfied. With the emergence of a self, however, comes tension, for separateness from the mother brings about in the child an acute awareness of the need for a person outside the self who is the giver of satisfactions, and a corresponding awareness of the danger of losing this person. In adapting to this new state of separateness the infant makes use of a mental mechanism that recreates in psychic terms the earlier oneness with the mother; he makes her part of himself, as he will do ever afterward with every loved person in his lifetime.

We have seen that certain measures employed by the Gestapo to break down prisoner resistance had the effect of reproducing the condition of biological helplessness in infancy. The prisoner was completely dependent upon his jailers for the satisfaction of the most elemental body needs. Hunger and danger enslaved him to his jailers who had absolute power over life. The ego, robbed of its capacity for defense against danger, was obliged to find survival techniques in an environment of unremitting peril, and one that was carefully contrived to sustain it in childlike dependency.

The ego, when it fears its own extinction, revives its oldest mechanisms in order to bind itself more closely to a world that is slipping away. It seeks to unite with a human object; and in repetition of its beginnings, the ego may find in body and survival needs the connection between it and the human objects that wield power over life. The ego protects itself against danger by identifying with the powerful persons and assuming their attributes. In this way, I suspect, the prisoner in the concentration camp found himself in grotesque alliance with his own persecutors. He borrowed the attributes of his jailers in order to prevent his own ego from dying. It appears, then, that the process by which a man can be made over in the image of his enemy is a perversion of the very process that gives birth to the human ego.

From analogy with the process of ego development we can see that, when this kind of identification between the prisoner and his jailer takes place, it is possible for the jailer to exert a strong educational influence upon his prisoner. If, in pursuit of its purposes, the state should see fit to indoctrinate or to bring about a conversion to its ideology, the very circumstances in which a prisoner through survival needs becomes attached to his jailer and has formed a primitive identification with him will provide the exact conditions for blotter-like receptivity, "taking in" and "swallowing whole," that is required in the school of demagoguery.

We have a clue, then, as to how when the human ego is forced into regressive modes of functioning, mental processes revert to archaic patterns; it is this ego regression that provides the favorable condition for a conversion experience. And this leads us to another part of the story.

III

When the reports of the Moscow Trials of the 1930's first appeared, Western psychologists were as baffled as the layman. It was not difficult to guess how the false confessions were obtained. But there was nothing to explain how so many of the defendants had come to *believe* in the false confessions they were making. In the show trials, it would have been possible for any defendant to repudiate his false confession before the world press, since the death penalty was inevitable in any case. Yet one after another of the alleged conspirators accused himself of treachery, of sabotage, spying, counter-revolutionary actions, and assassination plots—and in language of fervent self-abasement. Nor could this be explained by the expectation of mercy, for in the final statement to the court the prisoner often ended with an impassioned plea for the most severe verdict, the deserved penalty of death.

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Arthur Koestler in *Darkness at Noon* constructed a plausible picture of how the Moscow confessions were obtained. His Rubashov was broken down through an ideological inquisition to which, as a party official who had impeded political objectives through his own individual actions, he was vulnerable. But—as John Rogge has pointed out—this explanation does not help us in trying to understand the confessions of non-Communists to Communist inquisitors. How can we explain an Oatis, for example? Not only did Oatis confess to espionage and later testify against twelve alleged accomplices, but after his release he refused to repudiate his confession. When he was questioned about why he had made the confession in the first place, he firmly denied that he had been tortured. He could only say enigmatically that "psychology" had been used. Among others during the postwar period who confessed to Communist inquisitors were Vogeler, Cardinal Mindszenty, Archbishop Grosz, and scores of Catholic and Protestant clergymen in the satellite countries.

The inquisitional methods of the Chinese Communists were borrowed from the Soviet Union, but the Chinese gave larger scope to the inquisition by uniting it with a program of thought reform. The Chinese Communist prison became the center of a grueling and intensive re-education program in which confession served to "cleanse" the prisoner of ideological sins, and group study was then combined with certain extraordinary types of group pressures to build a new identity in the prisoner. The effectiveness of the program was seen in the degree to which even Western non-Communists came under its influence.

Robert Lifton, whose book *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism** appeared last year, was one of the psychiatric investigators assigned in 1953 to examine repatriated prisoners of the Korean war. From the stories of the repatriates he was able to piece together a great deal of information about Chinese Communist confession and re-education techniques, but he soon saw that many of the profound questions raised by this inquiry could best be explored through a study of men and women who had been "reformed" within China itself. Returning to Hong Kong in 1954, he began to search out both Western civilians and Chinese who had experienced "thought reform," and for seventeen months he conducted psychiatric studies of a number of these people. In the summary that follows I have used material from both his 1953 essay in *Psychiatry* and his recent book.

The arrest typically took place at midnight. A squad arrived at the house, conducted a search, and led the prisoner, blindfolded, to a house of detention. This was followed by a stage that Lifton calls the "Emotional Assault." There were day and night interrogations under bright lights. The prisoner was told: "You are here because you have committed crimes against the people. Confess and your case will be quickly solved and you will soon be released." The prisoner was given no rest for consecutive days and nights. When he appeared near collapse he was taken to his cell, but wakened in an hour to be brought back for further interrogation. Continued denial of guilt put handcuffs and chains back on the prisoner.

UP UNTIL THIS point the Chinese inquisitional method closely resembles that of the Russians. But now we encounter an element that is uniquely Chinese, and part of the thought-reform program. It is called "Struggle," and at this stage in the procedure takes the form of a group inquisition conducted by the prisoner's cell mates. The prisoner is always placed in a group of other prisoners who are more advanced in their reform process, and whose task now is to help him make his confession. The foreign victim sits in the middle of the floor while his cell mates shout invectives at him and denounce him as an arch criminal. (The prisoner is interrogated at night and "struggled" by his cell mates during the day; thus he is virtually without a moment of freedom from accusations of guilt.)

All this is accompanied by the reduction of the prisoner to complete helplessness and dependency upon his cell mates. One of Lifton's informants, a Dr. J., describes how, with his hands chained behind his back, he had to eat like a dog using only his mouth and his teeth. When he needed to urinate his cell mates opened his trousers. After

* Norton, 510 pp., $6.95.

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defecation a cell mate cleaned him. He was left unwashed for weeks, tormented by lice. The day and night torments and interrogations, sleeplessness, hunger, diarrhea, filth, rapidly bring the personality toward a crisis. Every part of the process (which is strikingly similar to Bettelheim's description of the concentration camp methods) is designed to effect a destruction of the self-image and a weakening of the boundaries between the ego and reality. But at the point of crisis in the ego, when surrender is imminent, an abrupt change of tactics is introduced by the interrogators. They switch to softness and leniency, expressions of concern for the prisoner's health, and apologies for their harsh treatment of him. They hold out promises that things will be more comfortable for the prisoner if he cooperates. At this point the prisoner experiences a tremendous gratitude toward his jailers, a feeling akin to love. He is now ready to make his confession.

The confession to crimes that were never committed begins with an acknowledgment by the prisoner that he is guilty "from the people's standpoint" of ideological crimes —his capitalist thinking, his service in behalf of capitalist groups are crimes against the people of China. Once the prisoner can even provisionally accept the "people's standpoint" he is able to see himself as an enemy of the revolution. And as he becomes more deeply involved in his confession and the scrupulous self-searching that is demanded by it, as he is "struggled" by his cell mates and his "judge" (instructor), who help him make his confession, he begins to accept, increasingly, the definition of crime "from the people's standpoint" and to regard himself as a criminal.

But the gap still has to be bridged between confession to ideological crimes and confession to criminal acts which the prisoner must invent, naming fellow conspirators, giving details of the "plot," and so on. This bridge is built by means of a fantasy which always has its basis in actual events. (There really was a man named X. The prisoner and X did see each other frequently.) The confession as composed and as written and rewritten over a period of months and even years is *the prisoner's own invention* and he improves on it as he goes along. Lifton says: "As the confession develops, the prisoner finds it looming before him as the basic reality of his immediate world. What he admits and what he writes become standard truths." Lifton observed that the degree of blurring of reality varied greatly among prisoners. Some prisoners came to believe in their inventions, but many were aware of the falsehood and distortion. During the writing of the confession, the prisoner is guided by his judge. The prisoner's failure to come up with satisfactory confessional material can result in renewed "struggle" in the cell.

There follows the period of re-education. The prisoner becomes part of a study group which is in session for ten to sixteen hours a day. One person reads selected material and each of the group is expected to give opinions and criticize the views of the others. Each must learn to express himself from the "correct"—i.e. "people's"—viewpoint. Particular emphasis is put on "thought problems," on "wrong thoughts" or "bad thoughts," in an unending confessional—the self-denunciation, casting out of evil.

During this time there is also an individual approach to the prisoner and his re-education (which may go on for several years). His judge, or instructor, supervises the prisoner's education and his progress. The judge keeps a case file, receives reports, conducts interviews himself with the prisoner. The prisoner, Lifton observed, forms a complex and ambivalent relationship to his analyst. Eventually the prisoner is put to work on the final draft of his confession and gets ready for his trial. All prisoners, of course, plead guilty. The prisoner is sentenced, sometimes to as much as ten years; but in the case of Westerners there is a show of leniency, and in many instances the Westerner is expelled at this point.

In Lifton's analysis the elements of the process are "death and rebirth." "The 'reactionary spy' who entered the prison must perish; in his place must arise a 'new man' resurrected in the communist image." In fact the words "to die and be reborn" are often used by officials, Lifton points out, and the prisoner himself may use them in describing his experience.

In the context of "death and rebirth" Lifton shows how the process aims at annihilation of the prisoner's former identity and

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the building of a new identity. (The destruction of the old identity is accomplished, as we have seen, by techniques strikingly similar to those in the concentration camps described by Bettelheim.) The ego is brought rapidly to the last crisis before surrender. At this point, many prisoners reported, came severe depressions and suicidal thoughts. Many others experienced delusions and hallucinations. The alternatives appeared to be psychosis or death. In this extremity, relief is offered to the prisoner from the outside. The sudden leniency and affectionate concern for the prisoner's welfare come as a flood of relief. The dying ego is rescued, and there is the promise of rebirth through confession and reform.

The confession represents an expulsion of the old identity, metaphorically a vomiting forth of the bad, the repudiated, the poisonous attributes of the old self. In some of Lifton's reports we see a kind of orgy of self-abomination, a confessional outpouring that gathers momentum and seems to take possession of the personality; it goes on as if through a will of its own. (Analogies with some types of religious experience come to mind.) And as the confessional orgy gathers momentum, the penitent finds himself with an increasing sense of submission to his jailers. The confession is an ecstasy of surrender.

The compulsion to confess has its origins in underlying forces that are not yet well understood. Yet once this process is set in motion it releases deep and secret reservoirs of feelings, the "free-floating" guilt that exists in every personality and is always available to attach itself to images and ideas, symbols that it selects for one or another reason. The prisoner, by adopting the "people's standpoint," Lifton shows, is able to channel these non-specific feelings of guilt into a paranoid, pseudo-logical system. The prisoner learns to regard his past actions as evil and destructive and can charge the most prosaic events of the past with the strong emotion that has broken through to the surface of consciousness.

IN READING Lifton I was struck by the fact that the making of the confession, the invention of a fictional criminal past, bears certain resemblances to the making of a dream or a delusion. I do not attribute this idea to Lifton, I am simply following a train of thought of my own. A dream or a delusion always has its point of origin in a piece of reality. In the regressed state induced by sleep or certain mental disturbances, strong unconscious impulses and ideas are liberated and unite with certain emotionally charged events of present reality to produce the imagery of the dream of the delusion. The dream representation is, then, a condensation of actuality and the repressed past.

Something analogous happens in the making of the confession. In the long months of writing and rewriting the confession the prisoner searches for real events and persons in his past and elaborates his fiction of criminal activities from the tiny core of reality. Like the delusion, or the dream, or the "big lie," this small piece of truth at the center gives the illusion of veracity. And, again in analogy to delusional formation, the powerful charge of emotion from unconscious sources, the overwhelming feeling of guilt, is invested in the fictional self-representation of "criminal," "spy," "saboteur," in the confessional narrative. Perhaps in the same way that a powerful dream is experienced and even remembered uncertainly as "real," the fictional confession is made real by the strength of the real emotion. The genuineness of the feeling of guilt authenticates the fictional representation of guilt.

Lifton makes it absolutely clear that programs of thought reform are not "irresistible." There were men and women who successfully resisted and retained integrity of personality. Among those who experienced thought reform there was a wide range in the degree of conversion. And in follow-up studies, it is seen that even the successful converts altered belief in varying degrees after being released from prison and establishing contact with another environment. The inference is that successful thought reform can be maintained and integrated only when the environment continues to reinforce the ideology.

Who is most susceptible to thought reform? Among the Chinese intellectuals, Lifton found, not unexpectedly, that the young people, the late adolescents, constituted the group ready-made for ideological rebirth. This is because adolescence in itself constitutes an "identity crisis" (Erik Erikson's term); it is the time for psychological rebirth. Among other susceptible types, both

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Chinese and Western, Lifton found that a "totalism" in the basic structure of personality (i.e., an "all or nothing" principle, a value system committed to absolutes of good and evil and unable to tolerate, either within the personality or without, the existence of impurities or imperfections) united with the totalism of the Communist ideology in the process of conversion.

Who is least susceptible to thought reform? A prisoner who maintained his critical faculties during the thought reform procedure, who had a theory about what was going on and an awareness of being manipulated, was provided, as Lifton puts it, with "one of the rewards of knowledge: a sense of control." As in any other situation of extreme danger, knowledge about the forces that threaten will give back to the ego the feeling of being in control. Lifton further observed that the successful resister avoided emotional involvement with his teachers and fellow prisoners, and maintained as far as possible his independence from the communication system of thought reform. "Humane stoicism," Lifton noted, also served many resisters well. But the fourth and most important resistance technique Lifton calls "identity reinforcement." By this he means that the prisoner maintained contact with his own identity, with his own history, his personal values, his interests, his vocation. As one of the priests said, "To resist . . . you must affirm your personality whenever there is an opportunity. . . ."

One last point: Lifton saw no evidence that "an authoritarian personality" was more susceptible to thought reform than a "liberal." Among the converts he found both. What appeared to be crucial in the conversion experience was the degree to which personal identity could be undermined through the guilt-producing tactics of thought reform.

IV

THE BRAINWASHING and concentration camp studies have together illuminated many obscure problems in the area of ego autonomy. Conversely, some of the researches in ego autonomy have provided startling insights into certain aspects of the brainwashing experience and the behavior generally of human beings under extreme conditions.

At McGill University, Woodburn Heron, W. H. Bexton, and a team of psychologists studied the effects of isolation on human subjects. Student volunteers were paid to lie twenty-four hours a day on a bed in a soundproof room. They wore goggles that admitted light but prevented patterned vision. They were asked to stay in isolation as long as they could (it was a rare subject who was able to remain longer than two or three days) and at intervals, during and after isolation, they were tested.

It was found that within this comparatively short isolation period, mental functioning altered measurably. There was a marked decline in reasoning and complex problem-solving ability. (All subsequent sensory-deprivation studies confirm these findings.) All but a few of the subjects experienced hallucinations,* and all reported confusion, inability to concentrate, and diffuse anxiety sometimes bordering on panic.

Of special interest is the "propaganda study" which was part of the experiment; it offers a fascinating insight into one of the psychological conditions that may produce "false belief" during the brainwashing procedure. The "propaganda" was a 90-minute recorded talk which argued for believing in various types of psychic phenomena (telepathy, clairvoyance, ghosts, poltergeists). After the subject had been in isolation for approximately 18 hours, he was told that he could listen to a series of records if he wished. Attitude tests were administered to the subjects before and after their exposure to this propaganda, and a control group was employed for comparison. As measured against the control group, the subjects in isolation showed a significant change in attitude regarding psychical phenomena following exposure to the propaganda material.

Two important points can be made here. Sensory deprivation produces regressive modes of thinking and perception, with a corresponding loss of autonomy in the ego. In a stimulus void (such as the isolation room) a hunger for sensory stimulation and for information develops. Against this background, the repetitive information droned

* These should not, however, be confused with the hallucinations of psychosis. The subjects—except in three cases—did not suppose that the images which presented themselves were real.

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out on the phonograph record produced such an impact upon the mind that many subjects experienced it as "truth."

The reports of prisoners who have undergone brainwashing bear striking similarities to the reports and observations of the subjects in sensory-deprivation studies. In brainwashing, regressive modes of thought appear; the ability to reason and to judge becomes progressively weaker; hallucinations are reported; and a panic that is greater than the fear of objective danger overcomes the prisoner: the fear of dissolution of the self and of personal identity, which probably corresponds to the panic states reported among the sensory-deprivation subjects.

As the psychologist David Rapaport suggests, the brainwashing techniques deliberately make use of physical isolation to break down the prisoner; but the prisoner has been isolated in a larger sense, from the external world and from all the sources of information that normally feed his personal ideology. The only information he gets in the immense psychic isolation of the prison is that which his jailers offer him: the relentless grinding out of accusations, exhortations, and lessons in the new ideology.

THE PROBLEM OF ego autonomy and surrender has also been approached through studies of hypnosis: Merton Gill and Margaret Brenman's *Hypnosis and Related States** furnish important data and theoretical formulations for the analysis of brainwashing. In hypnosis, the ego is induced temporarily to surrender certain of its vital functions, to give these functions and their control to another ego, that of the hypnotist. In order to bring this about, the hypnotist must employ methods that center all attention upon himself. He must interfere with and block certain ego functions that are vital for reality testing, the "I" sense and the sense of voluntariness, in order to take them over himself and achieve the necessary influence over the subject.

The hypnotist's patter and his instructions to concentrate on a single object are aimed at restricting the sensory intake, at excluding so far as possible the sensory data that normally preserve contact between the ego and the environment. As in the sensory-deprivation experiments I have described, the exclusion of normal stimuli has the effect of promoting regression. But at the same time the absence of any other stimulation permits the utterances of the hypnotist to achieve a great impact (analogous to the propaganda records in the isolation chamber). Gill and Brenman compare the brainwasher's unending barrage of talk about guilt and the new ideology to the hypnotist's patter; it commands the subject's attention and deprives him of free energy with which he might feed his sense of identity and his personal ideologies. The brainwasher—like the hypnotist (and unlike the phonograph record)—can make use of a human relationship and dependency to exalt his utterances and charge them with meaning beyond that of words themselves.

Under normal circumstances, if illness or incapacity immobilizes a person even temporarily, there may be anxiety, a sense of childlike helplessness, and an altered self-image. Those who take over the functions of the incapacitated body are endowed with highly magnified powers by the helpless person. When the hypnotist prevents his subject from engaging in motor activity he is taking an important step in acquiring control of his subject. The brainwasher, too, deprives his subject of freedom, even putting chains on him. The prisoner is not permitted to carry out bodily functions with any freedom; toilet, sex, and sleep behavior are rigidly controlled. Of course, the psychological influence and power of the brainwasher are greatly magnified (as compared with the hypnotist's) by the real power he holds over his subject, and by the fact that his subject, like the hypnotist's, is being coerced into surrendering autonomy.

Yet both the hypnotist and the brainwasher, when successful, bring about surrender of the ego because they are able to capture an archaic tendency in the core of the ego itself, a longing to abdicate, to lose itself, to merge with the outer world once again in primal oneness. It is as if there remained in the human personality a regressive longing for the union and complete fusion that preceded the first differentiation of *me*-ness and *other*-ness, the terrible solitude and tensions of separateness.

Both Bettelheim and Lifton make the strong point that there were men and

* International Universities Press, 1959.

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women in the concentration camps and the prison camps of Communist China who did not surrender their minds to the enemy. And, in what I presume to be independent analyses of the data, both authors come to similar conclusions on this point: a man who is deprived of his name, of his intimate human ties, his vocation and all the external nutriments for his personal ideology, can only preserve his identity by feeding it from within. He tells himself who he is by keeping alive his past, his personal values, the memories of loved persons, his intellectual armament. To achieve this in a hostile environment, one's personal identity must have a relatively high degree of independence from the environment. It was not moral belief alone that sustained the ego in extremity, but the degree to which conscience was internalized in personality and the relative independence of conscience from the environment. In the extreme situations in which the ego and its moral organization is cut off from its external nutriments and may even find itself in an environment that opposes its values, the internalized conscience may take over the function of the absent environment, *so that it supports itself, in effect, and provides its own nutriments.*

So the vulnerable center is "I." But it would be just as true to say that the invulnerable center is "I." There is no black magic in the possession of alien powers that can enslave the human mind. The methods employed to create total submission and conversion are neither mysterious nor irresistible, in the last analysis. The limits of the human body are known, circumscribed and predictable, and this ancient knowledge can be employed to bring about confession and subjugation of the human will. But surrender of the mind and conversion to an enemy's ideology must engage the ego in a choice, not a rational choice (since it may be dictated by a genuine peril to the ego's survival) and yet a moral one, if we are to give any meaning to moral behavior. The ultimate danger to personal autonomy, then, comes from within; the ultimate guarantees of freedom are invested in the ego itself.

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Algerian Jews, and Other Matters

MILTON HIMMELFARB

Two Cities

Algeria, now that it is about to become independent, has much in common with Central and Eastern Europe in the years before and after the 1914 war—the dissolution of empire, conflict between a dominant minority and a subordinate majority, and the Jews boxed in a corner. Most Algerian Jews, not to speak of their Secret Army Organization activists, would have preferred Algeria to remain French, just as most of the Jews in the Hapsburg lands probably would have wanted the empire intact. A minority of Algerian Jews were for an Algerian Algeria because they thought it just and progressive or because they were Algerian nationalists, as a minority of Jews in Prague or Lemberg (Lwow) favored Czech or Polish independence for similar reasons.

The case of the Jews of Prague is best known, on account of the interest in Kafka. They were part of the Jewry of the German *Kulturkreis,* whose fathers or grandfathers had spoken Yiddish. But one thing that made Prague so Kafkaesque for the Jews was that there German was the language and culture of a hated minority. The peasants in the country and the workers and servants in the city spoke Czech and, led by a nationalist elite, dreamt of the overthrow of German lordship. For the Czechs the Jews were hateful Germans, all the more to be despised because they were not really German. (The real Germans were not very fond of the Jews either.) When Czechoslovakia was established, the Jews were uneasy, briefly, until they came under the shelter of Masaryk's liberalism.

In Western Galicia the assimilating Jews were attracted to German rather than to Polish and in eastern Galicia to Polish rather than to the Ukrainian of the peasantry. In Riga the Jews who had given up Yiddish and did not care for Hebrew were partisans of the Russian language and culture against Latvian, even after the creation of a Latvian state. In Slovakia the emancipated Jews preferred Hungarian to Slovak.

Of two contending Gentile cultures, therefore, Jews were attracted to the more advanced one. The attraction was understandable and natural, but it made trouble. The success of Zionism in Prague and of Hebrew or Yiddish school systems farther east was partly—not primarily—due to a growing Jewish belief that when Gentile nationalities were in conflict it was more dignified for Jews to assert a kind of autonomous neutrality than to side with either. It was more prudent, too, because partisanship would mean the heightened enmity of one nationality and the ingratitude of the other, while neutrality, though it would not make friendships, might keep enmities tolerable.

In Algeria the Crémieux decree gave French citizenship to the Jews more than ninety years ago. Their equivalent of Yiddish was a Judeo-Arabic tongue, written, like all Jewish languages, in the Hebrew alphabet. It was abandoned, like Yiddish in Prague, because it seemed to the Algerian Jews that only by French citizenship, language, and culture could they lift themselves from superstition, ignorance, disease, and poverty to enter the world of modernity and achievement. Giving up rabbinical law —including the right to polygamy, only Ashkenazim being affected by Rabbenu Gershom's ban a thousand years ago—was no hardship. The Algerian Jews became zealous Frenchmen of the spirit-of-'89 and the liberty-equality-fraternity school.

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Unfortunately, not all Frenchmen were of that school. In Algeria most of the *colons* and many of the lower-class Europeans were reactionary and anti-Semitic. During the turmoil over Dreyfus there was violence against the Jews and aggressive anti-Semites kept winning at the polls. A half century later the Vichy regime—which has been called the anti-Dreyfusards' revenge—revoked the Algerian Jews' French citizenship, to the delight of the Pétainist mass of Europeans. Of the Moslems, not all were so delighted as Vichy had hoped. Many rejoiced, but the more thoughtful did not want citizenship withdrawn from the Jews. They only wanted it extended to themselves.

For decades the Algerian Europeans vetoed all proposals to make it easier for a Moslem to become a Frenchman, until they woke up to find that the Moslems were no longer interested. As soon as it was French nationality and nationalism against Moslem-Algerian nationality and nationalism, the position of the Jews of Algeria ceased to be merely potentially like that of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe forty or fifty years earlier. Only the Algerian Jews had even more reason to worry about the Moslem Arab majority than the Jews of Prague about the Czechs.

The agreement between the Algerian revolutionary leadership and Paris has guarantees for French citizens, including the Jews. (For a long time the provisional government had insisted that the Jews, being as native as the Moslems, should not be deprived of their Algerian status merely because imperialists in the 19th century had thought it useful to make them legally French. The Jews were touched, but chose to go on being legally French all the same.) Guarantees notwithstanding, and even if, impossibly, the hatreds and guilts of the recent and distant past are forgotten, few non-Moslems imagine that they will be able to stay after there has been time to develop a native intelligentsia, to use Khrushchev's phrase about some Soviet republics.

Who knows? The Algerian Jews might have done better as Jews in a candidly triple society than as legally French in a make-believe dual society. In Belfast a Jewish boy was caught one Orange Day between a gang of Protestants and a gang of Catholics, each demanding to know which he was. He had never been so glad to be able to say he was a Jew, but then they asked whether he was a Protestant Jew or a Catholic Jew. That question would probably not be asked where the Jews were one element of three.

Blessings

When American Jews have opposed religion in the public schools, it has often been on the stated ground that the religion is unacceptably sectarian. Not only do the Gideon Bibles sometimes distributed in schools have all of the New Testament and very little of the Jewish Bible, but also the text is the King James version, i.e., Protestant. Catholics use the Douay or other, more recent Catholic translations, like that of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Jews use the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Hebrew Bible. (A new one is being prepared.) The courts have ruled that the King James version is sectarian and that public schools may not distribute Gideon Bibles.

On the same ground Jews object to the Lord's Prayer in school. There is hardly anything in the Lord's Prayer that is not also in the Jewish liturgy, especially the Kaddish, or more generally in Jewish literature. But since the prayer taken as a whole is intimately Christian, from the Jewish point of view it *is* sectarian.

A few years ago the New York State Board of Regents recommended that if the school authorities wished to join an "act of reverence to God" to the daily Pledge of Allegiance, the children might say this brief, unsectarian prayer: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country." A Long Island school system used the prayer, some parents objected in the state courts and lost, and now it is before the United States Supreme Court, with a number of Jewish organizations arguing that prayer of any kind is unconstitutional.

So far there is nothing new. What is rather new is an additional Jewish argument, that *religiously* an unsectarian is as offensive as a sectarian prayer, because it represents a "common denominator" religion that is not the actual religion of any child. That is to say, the Lord's Prayer is wrong for the schools because it is Christian,

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and the Regents' prayer because it is neither Christian nor Jewish (nor Moslem, nor Buddhist). Released time—an arrangement for sending public school children, upon their parents' request, to their various afternoon religious schools—is bad because it is divisive, in that it makes the children too explicitly aware of their religious differences (otherwise, presumably, they would not be aware of them); while the Regents' act of reverence is bad because it is not divisive enough. Some Jewish state-church lawyers are going to be quite unhappy when sectarian differences between Bible translations fade—perhaps sooner than we expect.

In opposing both what is sectarian and what is unsectarian, divisive religion and common-denominator religion, Jews run the risk of sounding like the lord mayor who promised, upon taking office, that he would be neither partial, on the one hand, nor impartial, on the other. When you say things like that, it is hard to convince people that you are serious, or at any rate that you are saying what you really mean. The Jews argue that they are all for religion and religious education, but at home, in the synagogues, and in the religious school, not in the public school. Why that must mean opposition to a brief unsectarian prayer is hard to see. Religious people, especially if there is no sectarian issue, should surely agree that children, parents, teachers, and country need repeated prayers for God's blessings. Whatever we say, what we do proves that our heart is in a strict interpretation of the First Amendment's no-establishment clause.

It would not be surprising if the Supreme Court ruled for the appellants against New York State, because they probably have the better case in law. But it is only a legalistic bourgeoisie that confuses the legal country with the real country. (Though the distinction was made most often by French reactionaries, revolutionaries everywhere make it too, and liberals would do well to bear it in mind.) No amount of Supreme Court decisions upholding the separation of church and state and the exclusion of even unsectarian religious gestures from the public schools will make the United States any the less a *de facto* Christian country in its culture. In New York a real effort was made to meet Jewish objections to sectarianism in the schools. Having turned down the offer, we are less likely to find all religion kept out than Christianity reintroduced—through the back door, if necessary. Failing that, Main Street and Town Hall will take over, with fewer safeguards and more sectarianism.

Cloistered Virtue

The recent debate in the Knesset over relaxing security restrictions on the Israeli Arabs did not evoke much feeling among the Jews of the United States. Israeli parties and distinguished personalities, like Martin Buber, were for the removal of all restrictions, while Ben Gurion wanted to retain as many as possible. In the United States most Jews were prepared to go along with whatever the Israeli government decided. In the end, a partial liberalization was enacted.

How are we to understand this indifference in a community more vehemently devoted to civil liberties and civil rights than any other in the American population? There are two possible explanations. The first is that for American Jews, Israel is a kind of surrogate old country, and Americans with an old country often tend to be more royalist than the king. When Mussolini's Italy conquered Ethiopia in the 1930's, probably a higher proportion of Italians in America supported him than in Italy, and the Irish Republican Army probably had greater proportionate support among the consciously Irish of the Irish Americans than in Ireland. Ben Gurion is less controversial here than in Israel.

The second explanation is that while American Jews are often unrealistic about Israel, in one sense we are more realistic and less ideological about Israel than about America. It has often been observed that we are distinctively ideological in our politics—given to regarding compromise as betrayal and to seeing the final conflict of Good and Evil in the daily push and pull of interests. History has made Western Jewry as a whole dependent on the continued victory of the French Revolution and what it stands for. Our peace of mind needs a liberalism that is explicit about itself.

Being a minority, Jews cannot avoid we-they thinking. *We,* as a group, have never had political power. We have watched, sometimes with approval but more often with anxiety, how *they* exercise power. Having no experience of power, we have not

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been able to acquire anything but an intellectual understanding, if that, of its moral ambiguities. The powerlessness that has kept us relatively free from sin has encouraged in us a self-righteous moralism. Our unexpressed feeling has been that if only *we* were in power, we would show *them* how to govern morally and by principle.

Israel is a tiny country, but in that country Jews rule and must take the responsibility for their rule. If political power may be likened to sexual potency, then it may be said that in Israel the Jews, as a political community, have become potent again for the first time in many centuries. Any political virtue of theirs will no longer be the cloistered, unexercised, and unbreathed kind that Milton could not praise.

It is the vicarious experience of political power which Israel provides for American Jews that largely accounts for our failure to react as ideologically to the imperfect civil liberties of the Israeli Arabs as we would to similar imperfections in the United States—that, and the tendency of all groups to forgive or actually deny in themselves, or in those with whom they identify, what they would not forgive in others. For similar reasons, most American Jews are less critical than many Israelis of the state-religion link in Israel, while sounding the alarm over religion in the civic life of the United States.

It will do us good to realize that when we have power, actually or vicariously, we are as subject to its temptations as *they:* when we realize that the problems of responsibility are not simple, our critical voice may stop being so soprano.

In a recent *Eranos Jahrbuch* there is a great essay on Jewish Messianism by Gershom Scholem. At the end, after showing the majestic tension and pathos of the Messianic tradition, he contrasts it to the flawed reality of the State of Israel, the fruition of so much longing. But he is not ironical at the expense of the state. Quietly he says that reality, for all its lack of visionary grandeur, is more wholesome than feverish daydreaming.

It may be that Israel will help to reinstate reality not only for its own citizens but also for Jews in other lands. One test would be whether American Jews can come to understand how resistant the problem of relations among religion, culture, society, and state is to an unambiguous solution.

Irredenta

At Princeton (Habakkuk 1: 5) a kosher house has been opened for students tired of "eating out of cans and having an occasional tuna fish sandwish outside," and in Reading, Pennsylvania, a Catholic hospital has opened a kosher kitchen for Jewish patients, with a rabbi as supervisor. That seems to leave some major Jewish hospitals as the territory still to be redeemed for *kashrut.*

Most of those hospitals say they would be glad to introduce *kashrut* on the same optional basis. What they object to is the demand to be entirely kosher. Their boards argue that that would be technically inconvenient. More importantly, for them the demand implies an unacceptable proposition, that Orthodoxy is normative for all Jews and that deviation from it is both idiosyncratic and sinful. For the boards, Orthodoxy is one kind of Judaism among others.

The Orthodox do indeed believe that Orthodoxy is normative and everything else a sinful deviation, but they do not rest their case for total *kashrut* in hospitals on that alone. They say that a Jewish communal institution owes it to all Jews that they shall not be made to feel like tolerated outsiders, however courteously treated. What a Jew finds admirable in a Catholic hospital is not enough in a Jewish one. Total *kashrut* should offend no Jew, unless he is perverse, while partial or optional *kashrut* offends the Orthodox. What is offensive to none and necessary to many should be the public norm for all.

A judgment of Solomon is needed. The best practical solution may be that of a well-known Labor Zionist, in London years ago. Everyone knew he was anticlerical and free-thinking—what else could a good socialist be? Yet he was seen leaving a kosher restaurant. Challenged to explain, he said: "Don't worry, I didn't eat meat."

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CONTROVERSY

THE NEW FRONTIER

SEYMOUR E. HARRIS, *Lucius Littauer Professor of Political Economy at Harvard, is a member of President Kennedy's Task Force on the Economy and also Senior Consultant to the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Harris here comments on two recent articles by* OSCAR GASS—*"Political Economy and the New Administration" (April 1961) and "The New Frontier Fulfilled" (December 1961). Mr. Gass currently is a consulting economist in private practice in Washington, D.C.*

Seymour E. Harris: In two COMMENTARY articles of last year, Oscar Gass, that able and persuasive New Dealer and former economic adviser to Secretary Morgenthau, has delivered a very critical but unjustifiable attack on President Kennedy and his administration, on which I should like to comment.

What especially disturbs Mr. Gass is the choice of co-workers by the President. There are too many businesmen, and especially too many affluent businessmen, too many lawyers, and above all, too many Republicans.

First, let me say I am not so sure of Mr. Gass's facts. In writing a book (to be published in May) on the *Economics of the Political Parties,* I compared roughly 200 early high-level appointments of Eisenhower vs. Kennedy (I omit smaller categories):

	% Kennedy	*% Eisenhower*
From Government	47	28
Academic and Non-Profit Organization	18	6
Business, Finance, and Insurance	6	36
Law	15	11

Obviously Kennedy has depended heavily on academicians and government, and has not depended heavily on businessmen, as Eisenhower did. Note the 3 to 1 ratio for academicians and 1 to 6 for businessmen for Kennedy as opposed to Eisenhower, and the 47 to 28 per cent respectively for government.

I do not yield to Gass in my criticism of Eisenhower for worshipping the big businessman and giving him excessive responsibilities in the running of the administration. Too many businessmen means running government *purely* on business principles, often disastrously inviting conflicts of interest, or using government as a means of getting rid of second-class executives. Moreover, the high business executive reveals an unwillingness to stay on long enough to learn the tricks of the trade. The academic communities, in contrast, yield their best men, the Schlesingers, Galbraiths, Bundys, Tobins, Hellers, Reischauers, Kaysens, Rostows, and they tend to stay on. The danger of conflict of interests is minimum.

But that is as far as I go along with Gass in his views of businessmen in government. We have had many distinguished businessmen in government, even under Eisenhower, who have performed remarkably well. Folsom, Dillon, Gates, Baird, Stans, Cutler, are just a few. What is more, the academicians are the idea men, but not primarily administrators. The President is right to appeal to businessmen for his A.I.D. (Aid Program) administrative posts. Academicians do not often make good administrators. Nor do I see any reason whatsoever for spurning men of quality who come from families of great wealth—the Rockefellers, Harrimans, etc.

I do not go along with Gass in his stric-

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tures against Republicans. I am sufficiently partisan to have wished for a somewhat smaller number of Republicans. Of 220 high Eisenhower officials, I estimated a few months ago that 58 stayed in government service under Kennedy—most of these are Republicans. My principle would be to appoint a Democrat unless the Republican is clearly superior, with reservations to be noted. But it is important in these strained times to exploit Republican brain power also.

Gass goes too far. We are in the midst of the greatest crisis ever confronting this country. Smaller doses of partisanship are required, and the use of talent wherever available in such a period. This (though it goes against my own strong partisanship), is the wise policy. Mr. Gass should recall the Roosevelt enlistment of Stimson and Knox. That President Eisenhower disposed of the Great Democratic talents bequeathed to him merely suggests that he acted unwisely. That Kennedy has the Congress and the country behind him 100 per cent on defense and foreign policy is to be explained in part by his willingness to use able Republicans. (I do not of course mean to imply that I approve of all the individual Republicans he has enlisted on behalf of the New Frontier.)

MR. GASS SEEMS especially critical of such appointments as Dillon and McNamara. But who are his candidates? Before Dillon's name was even mentioned, I recall a two-hour session with Messrs. Galbraith, Schlesinger, and Samuelson devoted to finding a likely prospect for the Treasury, a Democratic one whom we might suggest to President-elect Kennedy. We could find no one. Having worked with Secretary Dillon, I can assure Gass that he is entirely wrong when he says that Dillon is simply carrying through the Eisenhower policies. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dillon is the first Secretary of the Treasury to acclaim publicly the need of deficits to treat a recession. He also accepts a well-known Democratic party theory that rising expenditures are financed out of growth and certainly does not accept the Eisenhower-Humphrey thesis that taxes are to be reduced *only* in prosperous periods just when, if anything, they should be increased. I may add, parenthetically, that of the many high Washington authorities, including several Cabinet members whom I have worked with, Dillon strikes me as the most able. He reads, he discusses, he is receptive to new ideas and yet retains the degree of conservatism and flexibility that is to be expected and wished for, but not to be had usually in a Secretary of the Treasury. Dillon promises to become the Alexander Hamilton of the 20th century.

And where will Mr. Gass find the equal of Mr. McNamara? Or of McGeorge Bundy, who is one of the most brilliant men I have ever known, and who, though coming from a leading and distinguished Republican family, to the shame of the Eisenhower administration was never used in the 1950's. The case against Eisenhower is not only that he did not use able Democrats, but also that he spurned many of the best Republicans.

Mr. Gass's attack on lawyers is largely unjustified. Indeed, they tend to be overly conservative. But they are not a dominating element in the Kennedy administration (15 per cent). And the real question is, who are the lawyers selected? Would Gass repudiate Stimson, Stevenson, Goldberg, Benjamin Cohen, Frankfurter, Robert Kennedy, Black, Warren, Fowler, Minow, and Wirtz?

What of Gass's complaints on specific issues?

In his view, the Kennedy-Dillon concern over the balanced budget is excessive. But Gass would do well to compare the views of Mr. Morgenthau, the Democrat under whom he served, and Dillon, the Republican of the Kennedy administration. Anyone who will take the trouble to read Blum's *The Morgenthau Diary* will learn that Mr. Morgenthau, an able Cabinet officer in most respects, was as devoted to the balanced budget as was President Hoover; and he threatened to resign because Roosevelt, yielding to his humanitarian instincts, was determined to help the impoverished even if that would unhappily unbalance the budget.

Compare the views of Morgenthau, or in fact any Secretary of the Treasury before Dillon, with those of Kennedy and Dillon. The budget deficit in 1961 was $4 billion and in 1962, $7 billion (estimated). Defense outlays contributed about 60 per cent of the rise of outlays for 1962 over the original Eisenhower budget for 1961. For 1963, the

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President, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Budget Director are seeking a balanced budget. With an expected GNP of $570 billion in Calendar 1962, and some further growth in 1963, they look forward to a rise of receipts of $11 billion and expenditures of $3½ billion. Should the expected GNP not materialize or expenditures rise beyond the anticipated level, then a budgetary deficit is likely.

Some (and presumably Gass) would like to see a deficit in fiscal year 1963 as a means of reducing unemployment. Many economists are of the same general view. But economists for a generation have been urging statesmen to incur deficits in depressions and surpluses in years of prosperity. The administration's balanced budget in 1963 is simply accepting policies that economists have urged for a long time. Indeed, now they are beginning to whisper that unbalanced budgets are not to be feared even in years of prosperity and, in fact, might well be welcomed, because as full employment approaches, a rising surplus aborts the recovery. But they have not as yet really convinced the economic profession, no less the politician. A rise of debt in 1963 of $5 billion costing about $250 million a year in interest in an economy that gains $20–25 billion yearly (that is, about a cost of 1 per cent of the GNP rise) is surely nothing to concern us. In assessing financing costs, we need not worry. But the relationship to inflation and the balance of payments of continued deficits canot be disregarded.

THIS BRINGS ME to the dollar problem. On the balance of payments problem Mr. Gass concludes: "In all of this, there is no irretrievable damage done and no occasion for great concern—except one. The cause for concern is that the New Frontier has shown no spark of new thinking regarding the United States policy on trade and tariffs. . . ." Perhaps Mr. Gass would not go quite so far had he at the time he wrote been aware of the President's new trade policy.

At any rate, I am sure the New Frontier would welcome suggestions from Mr. Gass for solving these problems. Members of the administration, both right and left, are concerned over the balance of payments problem. They realize that they are not as free to pursue expansionist problems as they were before the days of dollar saturation and concern about the balance of payments. They have considered and tried almost every possible approach to easing the external pressures. And there has been a substantial improvement in 1961, though the problem is far from solved.

Some administration attacks have been orthodox—e.g. pressures to keep costs down; others, like differential policies for short- and long-term money and special rates for foreign balances and tax adjustments to discourage capital exports, have been unorthodox. In a book recently edited by me (*The Dollar in Crisis*) 13 outstanding experts could come up with no novelties that had not occurred to Kennedy and his advisers.

Our critic also pokes fun at the administration for its rate of interest policy. The implication is that higher rates for short-term money are wrong and lower rates for long-term have not been achieved. Gass is wrong on both counts. The policy of high short-term rates, a welcome novelty, contributed toward the practicability of monetary expansion in the long-term market. A rise of long-term rates of one-fifth of one per cent in a period of 9 months when GNP rose by $41 billion or 8 per cent, and consumer prices increased by only two-thirds of one per cent and wholesale prices declined, is a tremendous achievement. It was made possible not by a foolish theory of Independence for the Fed [Federal Reserve Bank] as held by Eisenhower, but by making clear to the Fed that their policy must be consistent with the over-all objectives of the administration.

Unemployment is a very troublesome problem which concerns all of us. The anticyclical policies of 1961 and the specific direct attacks, e.g. unemployment compensation liberalization, manpower training act, the Area Redevelopment Programs, are all facets of an anti-unemployment program. Actually unemployment (seasonally adjusted) from March to December declined from 6.9 to 6.1 per cent, and there is much evidence that a proper seasonal adjustment would have reduced the unemployment ratio further in 1961. Gass underestimates the progress made.

Mr. Gass is still not happy. The Council of Economic Advisers is in the

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wrong, according to Gass, because they set a target of 4 per cent unemployed when the average unemployment had been 4½ per cent. Gass forgets, however, that unemployment was 7–8 per cent early in 1961, and that the Council on several occasions made it clear that this was a temporary objective. In early 1961 and even late in 1961, a 4 per cent target seems much more realistic than a 2–3 per cent one. Moreover, the historical rate since 1900 estimated at 4½ per cent by Gass does not convince me. Questions of the accuracy of these figures arise; and what is more relevant is the significance of structural unemployment in recent years and an average rate of 6 per cent in 1958–60.

PERHAPS MY MAJOR disagreement with Mr. Gass lies in his persistent statements or implications to the effect that we might just as well have had Eisenhower. This is so wrong.

Compare the determination of the Eisenhower administration to reduce public spending in order to cut taxes and the Kennedy administration's objective of increasing growth so that we could have an adequate defense posture and improved welfare services.

Compare the delays in doing what was necessary to reduce the adverse balance of payments and the decisive actions taken by Kennedy early in 1961. Under Eisenhower off-shore purchasing was encouraged for years even while serious losses of dollar reserves continued.

Compare the concern for the unemployed evident in the temporary unemployment compensation bill pushed through in record time early in 1961, as against the serious delays in 1958; in the Area Redevelopment program and the proposals for manpower training, and strong proposals for a radical revision of the Unemployment Compensation—instead of Eisenhower's yearly message to the states to raise standards. Gass may complain, and rightly, that the Area Redevelopment Program is inadequate. But what a struggle to go even so far.

Compare the major advances of housing legislation in 1961 and the continued opposition to a reasonable housing program by Eisenhower.

Compare the stability of interest rates in 1961 with the record increase (over a century) under Eisenhower in 1959–60, and the radical change-over from a record deficit to a surplus in 1959–60.

Compare the corruption in the Eisenhower administration even in the first year with the absence of any scandals under the New Frontier in its first year.

Note especially the prejudice in favor of doing something as compared with the Republican ideology of not doing something.

Compare the Eisenhower impairment of defense because of an unjustifiable view that large military expenditures would bankrupt the nation with Kennedy's determination to spend what is necessary.

Rowland Evans of the *Herald Tribune,* writing in the *New Leader,* recently expressed the differences between Eisenhower and Kennedy well ". . . the Kennedy approach is to exploit and utilize—glory in, one is tempted to say—the powers available to the Federal Government, whereas the Eisenhower Government was more concerned by fear of *over-use* of power, of Federal encroachment on the states, of encouraging the 'let Washington do it' attitude."

I am at a loss to understand Gass's unhappiness at Kennedy's relations with the Congress. When, except in the early years of FDR, were relations really much better? Indeed, the emergence of the conservative coalition under Eisenhower has not helped. In a great domestic crisis, Roosevelt could win Congress over to revolutionary policies. But a fall of GNP of one-third (in stable dollars), of farm income of more than one-half, a rise of unemployment to 25 per cent and a decline of prices of 25 per cent—these bring radical legislation. President Kennedy was confronted with an unsatisfactory economic situation early in 1961; but not a great crisis at home. He was also confronted with a coalition of Southern conservatives and Republicans exploiting the fear of government spending. If he moved too far ahead of Congress, he would jeopardize his program. *Qua* economist, I would have liked to see him go further, but I doubt that it would have been politically wise. In education and health, Kennedy has not been highly successful so far, but to imply that Eisenhower did as well or tried as hard is nonsense.

And, incidentally, I do not understand

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why Gass is so critical of my friends Galbraith and Schlesinger. They seem to me to be pushing in the general direction of all those who favor an adequate welfare program. Schlesinger's estimate of the magnitude of the advances to be made may not satisfy Gass; but from a political viewpoint they seem to me to be roughly appropriate.

Does not Gass really belong with the administration rather than against it?

Oscar Gass: I thank Professor Harris for the consideration implied by his closing sentence. No doubt it is kindly meant, though misaddressed. Otherwise, I shall follow the Hebrew injunction: respond to the first first and to the last last. And, to avoid wearisome self-quotation, I shall refer to thoughts expressed more fully in my COMMENTARY essays of April and December 1961, in most cases only by the relevant page number.

1. Professor Harris devotes the first ten of his substantive paragraphs to variations on a single unhappy theme: "What especially disturbs Mr. Gass is the choice of coworkers by the President. There are too many businessmen, and especially too many affluent businessmen . . ." etc., etc.

Two errors. Let me correct first the smaller. Regarding *especially* affluent businessmen, Professor Harris reports my thought to be exactly the opposite of what I stated it to be (p. 279). If men of property, then, in my view, on the whole *better* affluent ones: they are more likely to have independence and personal dignity.

2. But Professor Harris makes a far greater error. That is to attribute to me any primary concern with the persons chosen to be the President's "co-workers." It is the political music that disturbs, not the personal characters and qualities of the musicians. An older generation of Italians said it clearly: *"E cambiato si il maestro di capella,/Ma la musica è sempre quella."*

I am unable to characterize the Kennedy administration's political music adequately by a simple name. If I could have done that, I might not have written 24 pages. But, if forced to a name, I might call it an Immobilism. (Yet it is not quite immobile and not identical with the Immobilism of the second Eisenhower administration!) This Immobilism is not a matter of the qualities of particular co-workers; it has deep social and intellectual roots (461). Because it is an Immobilism, it does not feel the need to reach out, in an effort to create the popular support which would be required for fundamental innovations (286–7). Also because it is an Immobilism, it lacks the militant personnel and the drive to pull a working bloc of Congressional supporters into participation in the carrying out of a program (463–5). As an Immobilism, it understandably looks for support to established Republicans—as well as established Democrats—to conservative business figures, and to respected lawyers (462–3). As an Immobilism, it naturally finds intellectual sustenance in the politics and economics of Galbraith (286) and Schlesinger (465–6), who comfortingly portray a pluralist, pragmatic American society, in which power is appropriately balanced by countervailing power, and which has reached the happy state where, to quote Galbraith, ". . . no useful distinction can be made between luxuries and necessities." For this music, these players.

3. Presidents apart, Professor Harris cites, in praise, some twenty-five or thirty names —professors, Republicans, businessmen, and lawyers. I shall not comment on any of these. I am, in general, perhaps more appreciative of the character and intellect of Republicans and businessmen than Mr. Harris is, and may be less appreciative than he of professors and lawyers. But, with respect to a majority of the names he cites, I do not consider myself qualified even to begin to make a personal assessment. For a handful, I know the persons or their work well, and I think highly of them. For another handful, I also know enough to begin to form a judgment, and I think the persons concerned are probably mediocre or worse. But I will not be betrayed into personalism.

I would, however, warn Professor Harris, superstitiously, of the language he finds with which to praise Secretary Dillon. "Dillon promises to become the Alexander Hamilton of the 20th century." The kiss of death! Even Secretary Morgenthau, who had no aptitude for finance, could find some hack journalist to call him the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton. The most recent Alexander Hamilton was George Humphrey. (Secretary Robert An-

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derson, being a more scholarly and sensitive person, had the good taste to avoid such rubbish.) To be called the most recent Alexander Hamilton is the sure, proven road, for American secretaries of the Treasury, to merited oblivion.

4. I am unable to find any meaning in the table comparing 200 careers (or is it 400?) supplied by Professor Harris. The meaning is doubtful, firstly, because there is no presumption of randomness in the importance of the various entries. In such a table, Mr. McNamara and Mr. Dillon—who are, I suppose, counted as Business—bear equal weight with the attorney who was promoted from the Justice Department to FTC and the state utilities commissioner who was appointed to the FPC. (Which of my readers knows their names?)

The table is of doubtful meaning, secondly, because its categories are not clean. "Government" is particularly ambivalent. It includes both electoral politics and career civil service. Does Robert Kennedy come from "Government" because he worked for the McClellan Committee? Are Ribicoff and Hodges from "Government" as elected Governors? Are these then merged with the counsel of TVA who became chairman of FPC or the career foreign service officer who became Assistant Secretary of the Treasury? I cannot find the meaning in such categories.

The weight of the lawyers in our national government is not *measured* by the 15 per cent shown in Professor Harris's table under Kennedy. The fact that the figure goes from 11 per cent under Eisenhower to 15 per cent under Kennedy does *not* signal an increased weight. Neither would the weight be less if Professor Harris's table showed 10 per cent, or greater if it showed 20 per cent.

I do not think the numbers supplied by Professor Harris, in this comparative table of careers, have value in statistics or in political studies.

5. When he is done with co-workers and careers, Professor Harris devotes three paragraphs (and some scattered sentences) to budgetary policy. He raises the ghost of Morgenthau, then gives us a handful of statistics. If these statistics are intended to prove—what Professor Harris asserts repeatedly, without proof—that the Kennedy budgetary policy is distinctly different from the Eisenhower policy, then they fail. If the magnitude of budgetary deficits is the test, the Eisenhower deficit of fiscal 1959 was larger (283) than the Kennedy deficit of fiscal 1962. If the test is freedom from the shibboleth "We can't afford the money"—especially when labor and factories are idle—then President Kennedy and Secretary Dillon were not free of that shibboleth in 1961, when they refused (467) to support an effort of liberal Democrats to enact a trifling $1 billion public works bill. True, in 1962, the President has recently endorsed an even smaller ($600 million) bill for the same purpose; immobilism is not quite complete!

Professor Harris does indeed say, triumphantly, "Compare the Eisenhower impairment of defense because of an unjustifiable view that large military expenditures would bankrupt the nation with Kennedy's determination to spend what is necessary." But there is no economic substance in this contrast. Eisenhower knew as well as Professor Harris that the nation had not gone "bankrupt" in World War II, when nearly half of the national output was used for war. If he took a more negative view of increasing military spending and of enlarging the military-industrial establishment than does President Kennedy, this was a difference of social outlook, defense strategy, and foreign policy. It was not a difference over the budgetary wisdom taught to economics sophomores. Where, in the Kennedy administration, large bombastic slogans combine with halfhearted convictions, as in the civilian shelter program, we find re-emerging the old shibboleth "We can't afford the money." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

6. What Professor Harris claims for the Kennedy administration, by way of an innovating role in balance of payments questions, has no historical basis. There the apparatus of the national government bureaucracy continued to grind, in 1961 and 1962, on what was already under way in 1960. This continuity is true for all but the smallest matters, such as the repatriation of military dependents. The Eisenhower-Anderson-Dillon policy of 1960 became—with small, continuing changes—the Kennedy-Dillon policy of 1961 and 1962.

7. In international trade policy, there *was* innovation under Kennedy; the President launched what I have called elsewhere the "Crusade for Trade." Rarely even in recent

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American history has a public policy been more wildly over-advertised. Both its domestic economic consequences and its foreign policy contribution were assigned a value beyond rational consideration. But I have dealt with this matter, at length, in the *New Republic* of March 19 and March 26. Readers for whom that is more convenient will also find the complete text in the *Congressional Record* of April 3—where it was placed by Senator Prescott Bush (Republican) of Connecticut.

8. On monetary policy, it is a pleasure to be able to shorten my own response by turning from Mr. Harris, the Democratic professor, to the Democratic Congressmen of the Joint Economic Committee. The latter stated recently: "Monetary and debt management policies are capable of making, and should make, substantial contributions to economic recovery . . . they have not done so in the recovery to date. . . . Monetary policy was—and continues to be—largely immobilized in a posture more suited to restraining overemployment than to stimulating recovery." I urge every serious student of monetary policy to read this learned and penetrating analysis (*Annual Report* of the Joint Economic Committee, March 6, 1962, especially pages 13–32). It is severely corrective of the conventionalities repeated by Professor Harris.

9. On unemployment policy, the national record is most shameful, and Professor Harris does not assist matters. Uniquely with respect to unemployment in the first three decades of the 20th century, Harris displays a statistical skepticism which might be more evenly spread. We are all of us dependent in this matter on a few studies (principally by Long and Lebergott). Professionals appreciate the uncertainties of their findings. But these findings do suffice for the broad historical outline. And that outline is in direct conflict with the literary-political doctrine of our time (279). With respect to the rate of unemployment, we, in the United States, do not live in a Brave New World. We live in the world of our fathers, as it was before the Great Recession of the 1930's. Unemployment has not been at a lower rate in the United States in the sixteen years since World War II than it was representatively in the days of Teddy Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge.

With respect to the immediate unemployment position also, Professor Harris neglects the great, meaningful facts to concentrate on minor and specious points. First for the neglected, meaningful. *The expansion of employment in the Kennedy administration since the recession low of February 1961 has been less than in the comparable period of any other recession since World War II.* These are the facts:

Employment Changes in Non-Farm Occupations in 4 Post-World War II Business Cycles

	Decline to low month	12-month rise from low month
1948–50	– 2,289,000	+ 3,721,000
1953–55	– 1,711,000	+ 2,249,000
1957–59	– 2,176,000	+ 2,427,000
1960–62	– 1,099,000	+ 1,208,000

In our most recent recovery, through February 1962, the net expansion in non-farm employment is only 109,000 persons. And this is in a labor force 10 million larger than it was in 1948.

Instead of concentrating on such great, problem-posing facts, Professor Harris reports cheerfully, "Actually unemployment (seasonally adjusted) from March to December declined from 6.9 to 6.1 per cent, and there is much evidence that a proper seasonal adjustment would have reduced the unemployment ratio further in 1961." The point about "a proper seasonal adjustment" is just the kind that mystifies a lay reader—and it is an entirely specious point. Professor Harris is wrong; "a proper seasonal adjustment" makes no significant difference. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published this adjustment in its *Monthly Report On The Labor Force* for January 1962. There the Bureau stated, "The revisions did not affect the previously published rates for 1961 by more than 0.1 percentage point in any month." To whom does it matter if March, seasonally adjusted, now stands at 6.8 and December 6.0? Does Professor Harris perhaps owe his lay readers an apology?

10. I have not responded to all of what seem to me to be Professor Harris's misunderstandings or errors. By my count, as many remain unanswered as have been answered. But I have dealt with those I thought more important. Nevertheless, I enter a general warning: silence is not to be construed as agreement. It merely reflects awareness that even a generous editor has space limits.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Dr. Conant & the Schools

To the Editor of Commentary:

I hope that those who read Martin Mayer's critical review of James Conant's *Slums and Suburbs*, in the December 1961 issue, will also take the time to read the book itself. If they do not, they are likely to be left with an erroneous impression of what Conant's views really are. Paul Woodring

Saturday Review
Education Supplement
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

In concluding his review . . . Martin Mayer calls Conant's goals "so mean, so narrow, so easily accepted by the self-satisfied." When Conant writes what only the most courageous radicals inside education—and outside too—have said (such as, "We need to provide 300,000 jobs for slum youth sixteen to twenty-one, who form a reservoir of unemployment and delinquency," or, "We must give the schools responsibility for job placement of former students to the age of twenty-one"); when he quotes statistics which say that 59 per cent of the male Negro youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one are out of school and out of work, that 48 per cent of the boys in one city area who graduated from high school were unemployed, and that 63 per cent of the boys who left school also were out of work—can we disregard his warnings?

Why should these boys bother to stay in school when graduation for half the boys opens into a dead-end street? . . .

Mr. Mayer does Conant another injustice when he detects racial undertones in Conant's statement that he "would reserve judgment as to the question whether there is a correlation between race and scholastic aptitude." On page 17, in concluding his discussion of white and Negro students in the slums, Conant writes, "there is no reason to believe that these students as a group are inherently and genetically less capable than average students, but apparently because of some types of experiences in their lives they have been unable to develop their intellectual skills." In his anxiety to advance his constructive recommendations to upgrade the slum schools, Conant unfortunately underestimates the psychological effect of permissive transfer to non-segregated schools. But the job that should be done, he rightly emphasizes, can be started right in the slum schools.

Teachers can only admire Conant's forthrightness when he says, "I grow impatient with critics and defenders of public education who ignore the realities of the school situation [in slums] to engage in fruitless debate about educational philosophy, purpose, and the like." Most of us can also agree with him when he says, "Evidence indicates that it is the socio-economic situation not the color of the children's skin which makes the Negro slum schools so different."

Paul Grossman

Brooklyn, New York

Mr. Mayer *writes:*

A point of fact. Dr. Conant does not conclude his discussion with Mr. Grossman's quote. The quote I used follows it at the bottom of the same page. The word "undertone" was carefully chosen: Dr. Conant's conscious judgments are certainly free of bigotry, and do him honor; but his instincts do not always march with his judgments.

Dr. Conant is not by any means the discoverer of the warning signs Mr. Grossman cites; he is merely their most "trustworthy" publicist. His attempts at solutions—which I described, I believe accurately, as a Booker T. Washington approach—are neither radical nor practical. There is no reason to believe that the schools can succeed in supervising the employment of badly educated Negro slum children. Nobody knows how to construct the sort of program Dr. Conant seems to advocate, and the Negro community would never sit still for it, anyway.

Growing impatient with those "who ignore the realities" is an old dodge. When it is accompanied by suspicion and distrust of those who are changing "the realities," as it is here—and as it has been in Dr. Conant's scandalous refusal to give public support to any of the reform movements in science and math instruction—the attitude looks suspi-

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ciously like bundling with the powers-that-be. I think Dr. Conant is debarred from this sort of argument, having used it up some years back in his opposition to the MacMahon bill, when he insisted that only the experienced military could be trusted with atomic energy. Neither the generals nor the superintendents of schools are worthy of the faith Dr. Conant habitually places in them.

Jewish Responsibility

To the Editor of Commentary:

Nathan Glazer is almost always right, but in "City Problems and Jewish Responsibilities" [January] he was wrong.

Specifically, Mr. Glazer argues that it would be generally useful to divert from synagogues and Jewish centers some resources—funds, or facilities, or personnel, or all together?—to be used for Negroes, since that would relieve intergroup tensions and improve the general climate of the city. I am in favor of good group relations and happy people in happy cities, but Mr. Glazer's advice will help neither the Jews nor Negroes.

From the Jewish point of view: The Jewish center and the synagogue are institutions directed inward into the Jewish community. Their essential purpose is to insure the survival of Jews and Judaism. To transform them into intergroup, community-service agencies would in one sense be Jewish, to be sure, in that it would be carrying out a *mitzvah*; but the transformation would necessarily be at the expense of their Jewish educational and survival functions. Not so long ago some Jewish social workers were advocating that Jewish centers be turned into community centers. "Jewish" basketball, they said, was meaningless, parochial, and self-segregating. By now, I think there is a general consensus that the Jewish purposes of survival and community can justify even something so narrow as "Jewish" basketball. The child who comes for the ball game may remain for the discussion club or the Purim party or the lecture series or the Federation campaign. With the disappearance of the Jewish neighborhood, the Jewish center has become for many the Jewish environment that they do not find in their homes.

Furthermore, the resources of the centers and synagogues are much too limited, in funds and even more in personnel, to be transferred out of the Jewish community. American Jews have enough of other institutional resources for intergroup activities.

From the Negro point of view: Mr. Glazer notes, but without the emphasis it deserves, that many Negroes do not want any kind of white (Jewish or Christian) Peace Corps in their midst, teaching the natives the arts and skills of a higher civilization. There are few Negroes who would not resent, properly, a community center run for them by Jews, with whom they do not even share a religion. They understand their own needs better than anyone else, and they can meet their own needs better. Paternalism is out of style. In this matter the most effective thing that Jews can do is to stimulate Negroes into self-help activtiies: having Negro churches and community organization provide study space for children who would otherwise have nowhere to do homework; recruiting volunteers from among the thousands of Negro college graduates for remedial reading programs; forming tenant associations to maintain standards in their apartment houses. Does Mr. Glazer doubt that Negroes would respond better to such programs when run by Negroes than when run by whites?

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Nathan Glazer does a disservice to the Jewish community in his recent essay. . . . His remarks are grist for the anti-Semitic mill: "The Jews are the wealthiest of the three [among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews]." "The Jews and the white Protestants are extremely prosperous." "They are economically most favored and politically most content." "The Jewish and the white Protestants resources are greater than needs." The above half-truths deserve no comment. . . .

Mr. Glazer further states that the Jewish "problems are minor." I would suggest that he read the appeals of the Jewish Federations. Are there any vacant beds in the Jewish homes for the aged? Do the Hebrew Day Schools and other religious schools have no financial problems? Mr. Glazer is aware of and sympathetic with "the heavy burden of the Catholic school system.". . .

The Jewish immigrants from central Europe came penniless. However, they brought with them a heritage and culture. They had a respect and thirst for knowledge. They had a desire for independence. They achieved this through socially acceptable means of industry and frugality. They also brought with them a background of strong family ties and responsibility. . . .

Our primary responsibility is to transmit this heritage to our children. Secondarily,

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we may proudly point out the value of our culture to the outer communities. It served us and can serve them. As a starter, let us preach responsibility for the Negro father. It would do more good than a thousand community centers.

(Dr.) Menahem Steinberg
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Mr. Glazer, in an outburst of sentiment of universal charity, is ready to take upon himself tasks of Atlas-like proportions. . . . He wants the Jews to ease the burden of the Catholic citizens in regard to their parochial school system. No one will deny that it is quite a burden to those who belong to the low income bracket. But is it a Jewish responsibility? Did Mr. Glazer ever give a thought to the matter of the Protestant reactions to it? What about a system of Jewish parochial schools maintained by tax funds? I wonder if Mr. Glazer would approve of such a system. . . . For Jews to be conscious of their responsibilities to others, young Jews should be instilled with the consciousness of being Jewish. . . . Here's where the so-called "surplus fund" that Mr. Glazer claims Jewish institutions possess may be used to good advantage. . . .

Y. Zadman
New York City

Mr. Glazer *writes:*

There is a lot of good sense in what Lucy Dawidowicz writes. I do not feel, however, as she does, the urgency of using Jewish community centers and activities to insure Jewish survival. The phrase itself makes me uncomfortable—I see concrete needs (for religious expression, for political activities, for play and recreation); on the whole these needs are (in contrast to many other groups in the population) lavishly met. Whether they add up to Jewish survival is another question, but perhaps no matter how much we invest in *that* end it cannot be achieved by the type of community activities we are discussing. My own proposals in my article may not be very good—I was not too convinced about them even as I wrote—but when one sees the striking disparity in, let us say, the community facilities available in the ordinary Jewish neighborhood and the ordinary Negro neighborhood, and considers the vastly greater problems in the latter area, one feels something must be done, and also feels that the emphasis on Jewish needs, understandable as it is, is somewhat parochial. Again, Lucy Dawidowicz may be completely right in her belief that there is nothing Jews could do that would be helpful or acceptable to Negroes. But again, one is struck by the fact that the great tradition of Jewish charity is so completely turned inward, and at a time when Jewish needs are less pressing, one wonders whether this tradition can do more than it is doing (I know it is doing a good deal even now) to deal with the problems of the community as a whole.

Sacco-Vanzetti

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read with interest your article about the Sacco-Vanzetti case by James Grossman ["The Sacco-Vanzetti Case Reconsidered," January], and one fact which was touched upon but not emphasized has always seemed to have been very indicative of Sacco's guilt.

The fatal bullet was fired from a 32-caliber Colt, and the experts differed as to whether Sacco's 32-caliber Colt was the one used or not. However, one point not in dispute was that there were four bullets in the body, two of which were Peters, one a Remington, and one a Winchester, the Winchester being of the type so obsolete that neither the defense expert nor the state witness could find a matching bullet to fire through Sacco's gun for comparison purposes. Sacco's 32-caliber Colt was loaded with nine bullets, and in his pocket were 23 additional bullets. These bullets were not all of one make, as is usual if you buy a box of bullets, but were a mixture of Peters, Remington, Winchester and U.S. Several of the bullets were of the obsolete Winchester type which nobody else could find. This mixture of bullets matching the ones in Sacco's possession with the ones found in the murdered guard seems to be stretching coincidence too far.

R. Hugh Uhlmann
President
Standard Milling Company
Kansas City, Missouri

To the Editor of Commentary:

James Grossman . . . states that Herbert G. Ehrmann, in the book *The Untried Case,* makes out that the late Celestino F. Madeiros was a "gallant, romantic young man" when the truth was that Madeiros was a cold-blooded murderer. . . . In his book, Ehrmann writes that Madeiros was worm-eaten from birth, had fits, and was an epileptic. . . . A delinquent at fourteen, he had twelve previous arrests and convictions. He

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was mixed-up in shootings, rum-running, hi-jacking, and robbery. While in Dedham jail he made a violent attempt to escape which nearly cost the life of a guard.

Is this making a "gallant" out of Madeiros? . . .

CLEMENT A. NORTON
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It would be splendid if Justice, Truth, and Reason could be resurrected as guideposts in our individual and collective efforts at living. . . .

Now James Grossman's essay seems a curious compromise on the problem of past and current injustice. Grossman is prepared to reason that an injustice may have been done to one of these persons but possibly not the other. . . . The particular reconstruction in which Grossman finds us only half wrong is achieved by the delicate premise that certain police under duress would not be guilty of substituting one bit of evidence for another, and because an imprisoned man did not insistently cry "I'm innocent."

Let the time come when it is no longer necessary or futile for the victimized to cry out, and there is hope for us all.

JOHN ARSENIAN
Boston, Massachusetts

Zionist Ideas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *The Idea of the Jewish State* [January], Elie Kedourie addresses himself to my "conceptual framework" instead of dealing in the usual way with the material organized within the framework. As I place more stress on this part of my work than is often done, and Mr. Kedourie is the first critic to pay me the compliment of taking it so seriously, I should like to clear up certain points where I believe he misconstrues my approach.

The subject of my book was the way in which Zionist political ideas were formulated vis-à-vis outsiders. The main assumption was that this had to be done differently when the outsiders were Jews—that is, persons with whom all Zionists shared a "consensus"—than when they were non-Jews—that is, persons with whom not all Zionists shared a consensus. Mr. Kedourie finds my use of the term "consensus" obscure, and observes that I did not define it in the book.

To define "consensus" fully would require a monograph. In *The Idea of the Jewish State,* I relied on a reference (given on page 483—note 7 to the appendix) and tried to make my meaning clear by using the word consistently in one of its more rigorous meanings rather than loosely in all its connotations. On examining Mr. Kedourie's critical points, I find he has nowhere tried to show that my usage is ambiguous. All his criticism amounts to the same objection that on a series of subjects I assumed that a Jewish consensus (favorable to Zionism) existed, while he thinks this is the point to be proved. He arrives at these conclusions in part by consistently using (and imputing to me) an implicit definition of "consensus" different from my own, and in part by imputing to me a view of the Jewish acceptance of Zionism which I do not hold.

I do not mean by "consensus" agreement by two or more persons on common values which is prior to their uniting in a social relationship. I mean by it the agreement on common values by two or more persons who are united in a social relationship before any point at issue arises and who will remain united whether or not they settle the particular issue. In such a situation the common values which define the consensus are subject to wide variations. Mr. Kedourie, in arguing against me on the basis of the first definition, naturally raises a number of false issues and misconstrues my position.

Thus I did not say anywhere, as Mr. Kedourie suggests, that the Enlightenment and the Emancipation destroyed the Jewish consensus and that it "is now reestablished—focusing, however, . . . on Zionism and the State of Israel." About the Enlightenment and Emancipation I said that, in their wake, "Jews discarded some of the values and practices that had always constituted the framework of Jewish unity. . . . In spite of this, the Jewish consensus showed itself sufficiently strong and sufficiently flexible so that these aberrant tendencies were contained within the bounds of Jewish unity." About Zionism I said that its immediate effect was to provoke ideological division, but that the Zionists remained within a common consensus with their opponents. The common premise of this consensus was not Zionism, as Mr. Kedourie interprets my view, but "the unspoken belief (of both Zionists and non-Zionists) that however defined or constituted, whether as a religious or ethnic community, the Jews throughout the world shared a common heritage and destiny, and their problems were a single responsibility."

When I speak of the repudiation of non-Zionist ideologues by the communal con-

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sensus after World War I, or World War II for that matter, there is no reason whatever to prove, as Mr. Kedourie would have me do, that "Zionism represented a consensus in Jewry." It is enough to point out, as I did, that Jewish communities voted against their non-Zionist leaders. The consensus was not upon the acceptance of Zionism but upon repudiation of certain specific aspects of anti-Zionism.

Mr. Kedourie also questions my use of the term "sovereignty." He defines his own usage specifically, in this case: "Sovereignty is the capacity to perform sovereign acts." Whether adopting what looks like a tautology would have made me "readily understood" or not, this is at any rate a different usage from mine. As the passage Mr. Kedourie chose to illustrate my meaning is somewhat out of context, I should like to close this letter by quoting my own definition from the book:

"No precisely defined technical meaning is assigned to 'sovereignty' in this volume. . . . Of course, 'sovereignty' often refers in this discussion, as in more technical works, to the right and capacity (of a state) to establish and define all subordinate authorities and jurisdictions in a given territory . . . and to be independent of other sovereignties. . . . To indicate this particular usage, we sometimes employ expressions, like 'political sovereignty' . . . More often, however, 'sovereignty' in this volume has the vaguer, more general meaning of the right and capacity (of a people) to be master of its own historic destiny."

I do not, of course, claim any precision for this usage. But the complex of ideas and values indicated by the term "sovereignty," so used, *were* the core of the Zionist political idea.

BEN HALPERN

Brookline, Massachusetts

Facts & Interpretations

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lewis Coser in his review of my book, *Education and Attitude Change* [January], quite correctly points out that the question "Are Jews different from other people?" cannot be taken as a pure measure of prejudice. However, he then goes on to ask, "What is one to make of an interpretation which classifies affirmative answers as prejudice?"

That affirmative answers to this question *were not* classified in this way should have been clear to Dr. Coser from the following on page 33 of the book: "The words, 'Are Jews different from other people?' are factual; they do not refer to unfavorable traits that might be attributed to Jews. Taking the question in this factual sense, the less educated, who may know less about distinctive Jewish traits such as diet, customs or even religion might tend to answer in the negative. . . . Factual rather than subjective interpretation of the question may also account for the relative frequency with which presumably sophisticated people describe Jews as 'different'." Or from the following on page 35: "Depending on the respondent's interpretation, a positive answer may indicate hostility or may merely reflect familiarity with Jewish ways." Or perhaps from this statement on page 43: "There is reason to believe that the question, 'Are Jews different from other people?' sometimes measures familiarity with Jewish customs and traits rather than prejudice."

. . . . It seems hardly appropriate to refer to the inclusion of this question as a "methodological shortcoming" of this book.

CHARLES HERBERT STEMBER

Rutgers University

MR. COSER *writes*:

Professor Stember only confirms my initial statement that this question is so ineptly worded that the resultant answers are meaningless. What is one to make of a question which elicits *both* "factual" answers and "unfavorable images of the Jew?" If Stember was primarily concerned with factual responses, why did he include these tables in a study which is concerned with prejudice?

Hispano-Iberian Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Albert A. Sicroff [reviewing *De Mahomet aux Marranes* (From Mohammed to the Marranos) by Léon Poliakov, December 1961] speaks of Spain in the 13th and 14th centuries as being a unified nation and of Spanish Jewry at that time as having a common experience. There existed only a series of separate, independent kingdoms in the Iberian peninsula during that period. The lives of the Jews varied under each . . . monarch.

Sicroff also writes of "the establishment of the Inquisition in 1478" and refers to the "medieval Inquisition." The Inquisition, as an institution, was in existence since the 6th century. The establishment of "El Tribunal del Santo Oficio," as the Spanish Inquisition was known, resulted in an institution

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that was *sui generis*. . . . There were five inquisitions in the New World. That of Spain was completely autonomous.

The stress on the date of 1391 for the riots (pogroms were what they were) obscures the fact that anti-Semitism among the masses of all the kingdoms had reared its head almost 200 years before that date. Anti-Jewish sentiment in the Hispano-Iberian kingdoms came from the grass-roots and the Dominicans; it was not imposed by the reigning monarchs. . . .

SEYMOUR B. LEIBMAN
Mexico City, Mexico

The Civil Defense Debate

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I hope you will accept my congratulations on "A Debate on the Question of Civil Defense" [Herman Kahn—for: Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby—against; January]. The debate is a brilliantly effective journalistic stroke, a major contribution to public understanding of a vexing question.

NORMAN COUSINS
Editor
Saturday Review
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do not think the civil defense debate in COMMENTARY really made a positive contribution to the discussion. I do not find discussions like that of Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby serious in an intellectual sense, although I respect the seriousness of their feelings.

To put the matter simply: a thermonuclear attack may come, despite our best efforts to find the President's third choice between holocaust and surrender. If it does come, civil defense can save millions, and perhaps tens of millions of lives, although many more lives may be lost. The lives saved are not only valuable in themselves, but they may mean survival as a nation, not survival as scattered tribes. Survival after an attack could be incredibly difficult, but I do not believe it would be impossible. Finally, I cannot agree that the President's civil defense program encourages a bellicose attitude, or makes war any more likely.

ADAM YARMOLINSKY
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Fromm and Maccoby say rather patronizingly that they do not doubt Mr. Kahn's "good will and great ability"; yet their concluding statement reads: "At best, what these experts are giving the American public is a piece of optimistic guesswork governed by the logic of a gamble. With the life of a nation and perhaps all mankind at stake, it is neither *wise* nor *sane* to gamble. Herman Kahn's arguments leave us convinced that there is only one *moral* and *rational* way out of the grim predicament we are in: universal disarmament, combined with a political settlement in which neither side tries to upset the other's present position" (my italics).

It is clear from this that Mr. Kahn and those who agree with him are not to be regarded as wise or sane or moral or rational, despite the demurrer. . . . More important is the unwillingness of Messrs. Fromm and Maccoby to see the risks in their own position: unlike Mr. Kahn, they wish to gamble with the lives of millions of human beings by neglecting civil defense. In any case, it is obvious that *any* position one takes on the treacherous issues of the cold war, including the unilateral disarmament of the West that Mr. Fromm was advocating not so long ago, involves in some degree a "gamble." Further, the implication that Mr. Kahn is opposed in principle to universal disarmament (with proper controls) is absurd and malicious on its face. His doubts as to whether this goal can be reached in the immediate future are certainly not absurd, however; hence his desire to reduce the risks inherent in our "grim predicament" as much as possible with an appropriate civil defense program.

Finally, I was puzzled by the proposition of Messrs. Fromm and Maccoby that awareness of the truth that thermonuclear war is possible will lead to "old illusions" being replaced by "even more dangerous ones." This apparent contempt for truth, even unpleasant truth, seems odd coming from individuals who claim to speak in the name of sanity, morality, and (I presume) democracy, but perhaps it explains a great deal about some of their other statements.

JOHN B. JONES
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Fromm and Maccoby have given too little attention, and Kahn has ignored completely, the use of the bomb as an incendiary weapon. Gerard Piel, publisher of *Scientific American,* has discussed the firestorms generated by ordinary incendiary bombs in World War II: "the firestorm at Dresden

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is estimated to have killed 300,000 people in a single night; at Hamburg, some 70,000; at Tokyo, some 200,000. Blastproof bomb shelters afforded no protection in these storms; their occupants were found suffocated and cremated when the shelters were opened. The firestorm at Hiroshima burned inside the perimeter of the blast effect."

Then Piel points out that the area of the bomb's effectiveness as an incendiary weapon increases as the square root of its nominal power, while its blast effect goes up only as the cube root of its power. . . . (One estimate computes that a single 1,000 megaton bomb could incinerate six Western *states.*) It is most "profitable," therefore, to use the bombs as incendiary weapons by exploding them high in the air rather than at, or close to, the ground.

Used as an incendiary weapon, the bomb produces little or no local fallout, so the fallout shelter becomes merely a death trap for tens of millions close to the incendiary perimeter, who might otherwise save themselves by fleeing radially away from the zero point before the firestorm—which might take several hours to develop—engulfed them.

These facts would seem to negate the main technical argument for the shelter program, i.e. some protection is better than none. . . . Increasingly, in view of these facts, we may come to realize the force of Einstein's statement that nuclear weapons and national sovereignty are incompatible. Many of the intelligent people I talk to nowadays seem to agree with this proposition. Most, unfortunately, also agree that such a position is politically "unrealistic," even unthinkable; which reminds one of David Riesman's observation that almost all his college students agreed that though advertising had no effect on *them,* everyone else was taken in.

MORTON CLURMAN
Croton-on-Hudson, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Fromm and Maccoby . . . conclude that civil defense is a gamble and it is neither wise nor safe to gamble. . . . The question to which they never address themselves is: which gamble is the greater risk, civil defense or non-civil defense? . . .

To be sure, some of Fromm and Maccoby's arguments can be translated into terms of a theory of *comparative* risks; but obviously they are not in the same intellectual league as Kahn because they fail systematically to treat the problem in these terms, and introduce many arguments which merely insist that civil defense is inconvenient, uncertain, and highly imperfect —all of which is irrelevant to the main point: is it more uncertain, imperfect, and in the long run less dangerous?

LEWIS A. DEXTER
Belmont, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Ideals are what men must live by. . . . But what ideal will survive a nuclear war? What ideal has now led us to the brink of this thermonuclear game? . . . Fromm and Maccoby have most poignantly and sadly portrayed the "American Dream" of the afterworld. Congratulations to them both.

(MRS.) LINDA BELL ZIMMER
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There are two ways of thinking about nuclear war. One is to consider it a natural event for which, since it might be unavoidable, we must prepare with realistic circumspection. The other is to consider it as a moral problem, a view that might, of course, lead to a refusal of being in any way involved in a crime [without] parallel in history.

The necessity to consider nuclear war as a moral problem is also particularly great because the "realistic" discussion reveals loopholes in our assumptions which we cannot fill—because fortunately we have no comparable experience. In such factually undetermined situations a moral position can become most helpful. Yet we stubbornly refuse to make . . . attempts in this direction.

The January issue of COMMENTARY offers an example in point. A few pages after Messrs. Kahn, Fromm, and Maccoby finish their "realistic" debate, Martin Buber ["Samuel and Agag"], trying to divine God's will, has no doubt that the prophet Samuel misunderstood God when he killed, as he thought on His command, *one* heathen prince. Why does nobody connect religious thought with our preparations for killing, "if necessary," 60 million "heathens"? . . .

Could it not be that the American people's apathy toward civil defense comes from a conviction that *any* preparation for nuclear war could be indecent? Might it not reflect the sound revulsion against becoming directly and visibly involved in preparing for a moral impossibility?

HANS ZEISEL
University of Chicago Law School
Chicago, Illinois

[*More Letters on the "Debate" will follow*]

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THE NEW SINCLAIR LEWIS

SINCLAIR LEWIS: AN AMERICAN LIFE. By MARK SCHORER. *McGraw-Hill. 867 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by ELLEN MOERS

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS from now Sinclair Lewis may be remembered as the man whose Nobel Prize speech officially confirmed international awareness of an American, as distinct from an English, literature. Fifty years from now, his name may persist in bemused footnotes to studies of Theodore Dreiser, whom Swedish pundits considered and brushed aside to make room for Lewis. In either nebulous future, how will Mark Schorer's biography appear? Perhaps as, in itself, the last gasp of American provincialism.

The reviewers have been nearly unanimous, expressing vague awe at a book so long and heavy, at so many years spent, at such a collection of anecdotal trivia (some of it irrelevant, some of it misinterpreted, and some of it, as the reviewers knew from personal experience, inaccurate). They all seemed to be impressed by the big thing and the hard work, as if the one were intrinsically beautiful and the other intrinsically distasteful. But Mr. Schorer's labors have also elicited a very special reaction: gratitude at his condescension. Why did Mr. Schorer do it? How could he ("learned, complex, full of the special and touchy sensibility of modern criticism," as Alfred Kazin describes him) have stooped to write of the "literary roughneck," Sinclair Lewis?

In a piece published in the *New York Times Book Review* a month or so before the biography appeared, Schorer tried to answer the same mournful question. *His* writers, he said, were naturally Blake and James and Jane Austen and D. H. Lawrence. *He* was a professor of the humanities, with all that may (or may not) imply. "Between Mark Schorer the cultivated literary man and Sinclair Lewis the writer of natural talent," Irving Howe said, "there is a great distance and no easy way of bridging it." Whatever malice may lie in Mr. Howe's statement, his comment states a truth about the American literary critic, who can so often discriminate finely in the world of English letters, only to lose balance and perspective when he turns his face to home. I wrote about Sinclair Lewis, Mr. Schorer tells us, because he "came from my kind of town." It was not, in the end, a good reason.

The critic-scholar in Mr. Schorer appears to have found Sinclair Lewis a bad stylist, who wrote too many sloppy novels based on a conglomeration of ill-digested, unresolved, and disorganized ideas. The American in Mr. Schorer took this discovery as a personal affront; and, with the domestic tendency to exaggerate and dramatize, turned Lewis's insufficiency into a colossal failure, in which all Americans were somehow implicated. Lewis's life must then be seen, by Schorer, as "an allegory of uneasy, hapless waste, a life which, long before his death, had become the object of the world's pity and contempt."

Is it true? Some happiness and some achievement came Lewis's way, mostly in his thirties and forties; some misery and some failure came too, when he was growing up and when he was dying. His pattern of a life was not new, startling, nor particularly American. Lewis had no gift for marriage or fatherhood, though he derived some satisfaction from both. He made some friends and lost more. He found that enormous wealth and widespread celebrity in his own lifetime did not bring unalloyed peace or joy; who ever thought they would? He was not particularly misunderstood or cramped as a boy; his home and family were not particularly unhappy; his rise to financial success was not fraught with unusual difficulties. Unless we are to imagine Lewis as a professional writer of comic verse (sev-

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eral surprisingly attractive samples are printed by Schorer and by the first Mrs. Lewis), we must allow that he wrote up to the full measure of his quality—and rather beyond his allotted quantity.

But Mr. Schorer is intent on showing us that "it was in many ways a disastrous life, full of sordid horror." Lewis's early and lasting admiration for his father (whose sense of responsibility as a country doctor Schorer calls a "dubious puritanism") must be seen as "an appalling regard." His unrequited puppy love was an "agonizing experience." And the legend of Lewis's career at Yale becomes oddly commonplace under the hammer-blows of Mr. Schorer's emphasis. "It was a brutal shock," he writes of Lewis's social failure at college. "Even for one such as he, accustomed now [at eighteen!] to the abrupt collapse of anticipatory dreams, it was traumatic, an extended trauma."

LEWIS'S ARRIVAL AT Yale was in fact approved and prepared by a considerate father, who seems to have been rather generous than the reverse with his son's allowance. Lewis did discover that he was, next to the wealthy Eastern boys, rather gauche; he was never to be the most popular man on campus. His friends were likely to be older graduate students, young faculty members, poor boys of talent rather than wholesome, handsome, campus heroes. Such a college career may be considered traumatic where Mr. Schorer teaches, but it is hardly unusual for a bright boy in the East.

Indeed, Lewis did fairly well at Yale, as Schorer's researches demonstrate. He was successful academically as long as he was interested and became Chauncey Tinker's favorite student (their friendship lasted many years). He was elected an editor of the *Lit* (though, traumatically, his initials were at first incorrectly printed on the masthead). He was elected to the *Yale Monthly Magazine* and offered, ahead of William Rose Benét, the editorship of the *Courant*. He left Yale voluntarily in his senior year, was easily readmitted by faculty vote. and, though never invited to join Liver & Onions (or whatever that Yale society is called), he was considered for an instructorship before he had his degree. Schorer's account of Lewis's college career may suggest that Yale was not a very good school, that Lewis was brighter than average, or that boys will be boys—but it certainly does not add up to sordid horror.

Mr. Schorer disapproves of Lewis's excessive drinking and frowns when Lewis, at last on the wagon, denies his guests a drink. He dislikes Lewis's first wife intensely, worships his second wife (Dorothy Thompson) uncritically, and when Lewis takes up with a pretty young actress Schorer opines that he should have done it twenty-seven years before. He clicks his tongue over Lewis's presumed sexual coldness and, in one of the most embarrassing paragraphs in the book, shudders at Lewis's extra-marital relations.

When Lewis takes a kindly and helpful interest in his young nephew, Schorer finds it "strange." When Lewis and Edith Wharton achieve a pleasant relationship across two generations and two continents, it makes Schorer "wonder just what Lewis's motives in dedicating [*Babbitt*] to her were." No public act is allowed to stand unchallenged. Few private gestures of conviction or generosity (there are many in Lewis's story) escape the hunt for hidden motives. For Schorer appears to react to Lewis as a descendant, a relative, or a fellow American—not as the biographer of a man who entered history, after all, as a writer.

The interesting questions about Lewis remain unanswered. Was he that rare (but not unknown) bird, the immensely popular author who also had genius? Did he see clearly and record accurately something new and vital in American society, or was he blind to the realities of American life? Did he make history—or did he ignore it? If Lewis wrote books of lasting value, then—and only then—the petty irritations and nagging miseries of his "American life" deserve our close attention.

About a year before this biography was published, Mr. Schorer went on record with a rather ambiguous statement (in an English Institute Essay) to the effect that *Elmer Gantry* was the "purest" Lewis because it was "pure in revulsion." In the biography he seems to press for *Babbitt* as, if not the purest, then the best of Lewis. But it is very difficult to pin Mr. Schorer down to his curious theory of the "half truth" in literature. "Perhaps it is futile," he writes unguardedly in the biography, "to approach

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any Lewis novel as a work of art. Certainly, if *Babbitt* cannot be thus approached, none of the other novels can be. . . ." But in 1922, he goes on to say, "artistic considerations" were far less important than timeliness and popularity. Less important to Schorer? to Lewis? to James Joyce? 1922 was the year of *Ulysses,* that other book about a salesman.

Nastiness, folly, cowardice, misanthropy, and drunkenness cover the surface of Joyce's life as thickly as Sinclair Lewis's. But Richard Ellmann's recent masterly study of Joyce comes as close to a definition of literary greatness as we are likely to get from biography—while Mr. Schorer's book offers little more than an "allegory" of the second-rate. If the generation of 1962 (which has cut its teeth on "artistic considerations") turns to read Lewis, what will they find? That his first novels (*Our Mr. Wrenn, The Trail of the Hawk, The Job*) took up the subject of the little man with a kind of decency; a modest, low-keyed sensibility; and no style beyond a certain fluency—which would in time prove fatal. There is also a striking similarity of attitude to H. G. Wells (whom Lewis read and revered) which culminated in *Main Street,* Lewis's best book, where his blurred vision actually enhances the drawing of Carol Kennicott, an oblique portrait of his first wife, the only person Lewis seems to have studied close up, with some balance between scorn and affection.

Perhaps misled by H. L. Mencken, or by the furor *Main Street* had aroused ("With the large sale of *Main Street,*" Lewis said, "I am convinced of my essential commonplaceness"), Lewis turned to a field for which he had little talent and less preparation: satire of the total American scene. *Babbitt* is a distressing hodge-podge of skits, all out of focus, and all bypassing the essential question of moral responsibility in commercial life. It is as if Lewis had set out to make a whole book of a character sketch from a page of *The Titan,* omitting the drama of good and evil in Dreiser's Cowperwood, for whom Babbitt might function as an insignificant front man. *Elmer Gantry* is today unreadable; its flagrant hysteria and coy sexuality add up to what might be called "pure" silliness. *Arrowsmith* and *It Can't Happen Here* make good juvenile reading, even now. *Dodsworth* was an attempt to return to the matter of *Main Street,* and should have been a very funny book; the fact that it appeared in the year of the Crash (which Lewis dimly saw coming) gives an air of embarrassment to a story about a rich man's search for a way to spend excess money and leisure. The last books, best-sellers all, are, as Mr. Schorer is the first to say, clap-trap.

WE ARE LEFT with Sinclair Lewis as the man who led "an American life." Lewis knew very little about his country (which was very American of him). To "get up" the Zenith of *Babbitt* he invented "research" as a substitute for knowledge. He was ignorant of the workaday world, and his "research" never led him beyond parody. He was, if anything, over-educated. He knew Greek and Latin, spoke French and German fluently. (Schorer gives a delightfully American portrait of Lewis in Rome talking German expressly to annoy Blaise Cendrars.) As a young man he read too much, especially in the most serious literary fads: Ernst Haeckel, Max Nordau, Maeterlinck, Swinburne, LeGallienne (the list is from 1903–05). Made-up adventures on tramp steamers, sweaty with romance, filled his college summers. After college, having decided that he would be an author, he scorned the Grub Street hurly-burly of New York for the artificial literary utopias of Helicon Hall and Carmel-by-the-Sea. He had an academic mind: as Schorer suggests, Lewis's progeny have been the sociologists.

Far from being the legendary crude son of the open prairies, Lewis turns out, from Schorer's labors, to have been the effete literary man of the open mouth. Lewis talked too much. He could not get on a steamship without making a statement—which had to be canceled out, by an even wordier statement, on the other side of the ocean. He could toss off impromptu verses on, say the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, in the style of Vachel Lindsay, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Swinburne, the "rhymes and metres [so] perfect, the parodies so keen that even the Germans did not need to be told what they were" (as Vincent Sheean remembered). His talent, or rather his stamina, as a mimic was deservedly legendary.

Lewis suffered from the classic American ailment of second-generation pioneers: he

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feared and hated wide open spaces, unless protected from them, on camping trips, by convivial pals and an experienced guide. He hated roughness, newness and rawness, harsh climate, bodily discomfort, physical danger. Perhaps the saddest bit of Americana in Schorer's biography is his quotation of Lewis's final prescription for the ideal prairie town, a design which had haunted him from *Main Street* on: "It would be walled, almost like a medieval village, with trees and shrubs—evergreens that would protect it in winter. It would not be ridiculous to think of tunnels, carrying communal heating pipes, connecting houses to schools and arcaded charming shops."

Mr. Schorer's biography, and the rereading of Lewis occasioned by its publication, may have the strange effect of placing Sinclair Lewis firmly and finally in the American literary tradition of gentility. For under the slang, the noise, and the welter of blurred images, Lewis's subject is essentially social intercourse. He seems to have been trying to teach people how to behave, or not to behave, *in public*. Through it all his kind and rather gentle faith in America came through: that there was nothing wrong below the surface of American life, nothing in need of change except the surface. Mr. Schorer credits Lewis, rather oddly, with being the last American novelist to concern himself with social class; we might want to say that he was the last to ignore history.

DISCUSSING THE JEWS

THE JEW IN A GENTILE WORLD: AN ANTHOLOGY OF WRITINGS ABOUT JEWS BY NON-JEWS. Edited by ARNOLD A. ROGOW, with an Introduction by C. P. SNOW and an Epilogue by HAROLD D. LASSWELL. *Macmillan. 385 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by MILTON HINDUS

IN AN ARTICLE published many years ago, I venturesomely suggested the gathering together of what I called (with intended irony) a "Treasury of Anti-Semitism," which might prove therapeutic for those who had never read such literature. And when I first saw the ad for *The Jew in a Gentile World* quoting the charitable sentiment of H. L. Mencken in 1920: "The case against the Jews is long and damning; it would justify ten thousand times as many pogroms as now go on in the world," I thought for a moment that someone had acted upon my suggestion. The book actually before us turns out to be different, however, from the one I had in mind.

The bias of my "Treasury" should have been humanistic; Mr. Rogow's interests are primarily social scientific (he teaches politics at Stanford). I had envisaged sections from Juvenal, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Dostoevsky, Richard Wagner, Jacob Burckhardt, Henry Adams: significantly, the only one of these authors who finds a place in Mr. Rogow's scheme is Henry Adams. The purpose of my projected collection was, as I have indicated, therapeutic: an immunization accomplished by the administering of homeopathic doses of poison so as to render the subject finally impervious to the most massive doses of the same poison.

The disease I was concerned with combating in this way was that form of self-hatred to which Jewish intellectuals who make an idolatry of some immaculately conceived pure art or scholarship or science seem to be especially prone when they discover, inevitably, that anti-Semitism is a feeling which has infected not only idiots, morons, and those low on the social and intellectual scale, but also "some of the most powerful intellectuals and artists, the ones most sensitive to injustice, those most satiric of prejudice"—to quote from my article.

Mr. Rogow's approach in his book is not by way of the feelings but by way of the abstract understanding; he is interested not in "the gentile world" as internalized within the mind of the individual Jew but in the relation of the Jew (presumed to be some monolithic psychological entity) to a world roughly split up between allies and enemies. His laudable purpose is to ameliorate Gentile-Jewish group relations in this world which is plagued by hostilities enough of other kinds.

Mr. Rogow's method is judiciously to intermix utterances of anti-Semites, philo-Semites, and what may be called "neutralists." In at least one instance—that of John Jay Chapman—he presents the case of a philo-Semite who in a period of some thirty years went all the way over to the other side. Occasionally—as in the cases of Gen-

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eral Grant, Peter Stuyvesant, and Apion—the editor has had to depart from his own rule, and include Jewish writers (Josephus *et al.*) as the only source of our knowledge of the views of certain opponents (such as Apion) or in order to provide a necessary context for the non-Jewish document.

The contents are distributed over five historical divisions—two for the ancient world, one for the Middle Ages, and one each for modern Europe and America. The American section is disproportionately large, not because we have been blessed with more anti- or philo-Semitism but because the editor's attention has been more engaged by American manifestations. The unintentional result of this imbalance makes for a contribution to an "American Studies" program, with a number of small-fry represented only because they are Americans, while in other cultures and earlier times some of the undoubted "giants" are omitted. Mr. Rogow's division of history into ancient, medieval, and modern would indicate that he takes no stock in the organismic view of civilizations developed by such writers as Spengler and Toynbee, and perhaps for this reason he omits both of them from his table of contents though they have had much to say that is controversial and suited to his subject.

Whether the jarring juxtapositions in this volume of pro *and* con will provoke us to thoughtful self-analysis—as Harold Laswell hopes in the Epilogue—or to melancholy or rage, will probably depend on the reader and his mood. Usually books in this field are anti-Semitic tracts like Céline's *Bagatelles pour un massacre* or *L'Ecole des cadavres*—or else they are exercises in apologetics—like an excellent volume I have before me as I write: *Témoignages sur Israël dans la littérature française* published in Paris in 1938 by Rabbi Jacob Kaplan. We do not ordinarily expect to find cheek by jowl passages from *Mein Kampf* with others from the writings of Thomas Jefferson or John Adams, who is quoted here as having said: ". . . in spite of Bolingbroke and Voltaire I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing nations."

Within forty pages of these words appear Hitler's potent paranoiacally brewed mixtures of categories: "If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men. . . . I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jews I am fighting for the work of the Lord."

IT SEEMS ILLUSORY to suppose that the anti-Semite and the philo-Semite are talking about the same object. The more I myself look into such literature the more I think that anti-Semitism, in its pure and virulent form, must be related to the most elemental passions of mankind. The thousand and one efforts and dodges which have been used to rationalize it (the intellectual ingenuity of a Werner Sombart, for instance, which is almost "Jewish" by his own criteria, though it does not succeed in disguising completely his own romantic and irrationalist roots) are simply efforts to create an illusion of objectivity.

Anti-Semitism may be compared to the aberrant sexual passions which, as we know from Proust's Charlus and from André Gide, are also capable of being rationalized with impressive flights of rhetoric. The hypothesis of an affinity between anti-Semitism and the sexual passions seems to me to find some support in a curious passage from *Mein Kampf* which is reprinted here: "The relation of the Jews to prostitution and, even more, to the white-slave traffic, could be studied in Vienna as perhaps in no other city of Western Europe. . . . When thus for the first time I recognized the Jew as the cold-hearted, shameless, and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the big city, a cold shudder ran down my back. . . . but then a flame flared up within me. I no longer avoided discussion of the Jewish question; no, now I sought it."

Of course, one must not underestimate the influence of tradition upon the expression of anti-Semitic feelings. Or should I say traditions? Obviously, there is more than one. Mark Twain points out that anti-Semitism antedates Christianity, and to

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judge from the pagan Hitlerites and the atheistic Communists it is something quite capable also of surviving Christianity. But this does not argue, as some including Twain would apparently have it do, that there is something *objectively* about the Jew which provokes the response—something, that is to say, other than vulnerability, exposure, weakness. To reduce anti-Semitism, I am convinced, only one thing is necessary, and that is to reduce the vulnerability of Jews to it. That course should confer a general benefit, by removing temptation from the path of all men.

Probably no better plan has suggested itself than the one half-jokingly, half-seriously put forward by Mark Twain in his *Harper's* essay "Concerning the Jews" in 1899: "If I may make a suggestion without seeming to be trying to teach my grandmother how to suck eggs, I will offer it. In our days we have learned the value of combination. We apply it everywhere—in railway systems, in trusts, in trade-unions, in Salvation Armies, in minor politics, in major politics, in European Concerts. . . . We know the weakness of individual sticks, and the strength of the concentrated fagot. . . . You do not seem to be organized, except for your charities. There you are omnipotent; there you compel your due of recognition—you do not have to beg for it. It shows what you can do when you band together for a definite purpose." The history of the sixty-three years since these words were written is that of the experimental application of their moral wherever Jews have been free to act, and few today, I think, would contest the efficacy.

I have already indicated some regrettable omissions in Mr. Rogow's book. It is inevitable, to be sure, that different readers will have their own nominations to make. Yet it is hard for me to understand the omission of George Washington's letter to the Congregation of Newport, or the choice of Lydia Maria Child's whimsical account of her visit to the Crosby Street Synagogue in New York in preference to Walt Whitman's description of his visit to the same edifice. And ought Mr. Rogow not, in his modern European section, have made room for Voltaire and Rousseau if not for Charles Péguy and Emile Zola? The reasons he gives for choosing selections from Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* rather than from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* seem to me arbitrary. It is not, after all, the melodramatic villain Barabas but the "human" Shylock demanding his pound of flesh whose image has been imprinted as indelibly upon the imagination of mankind as that of the crucifixion.

One must also question some of Mr. Rogow's editorial comments. He tells us, for example, that "Hitler became an anti-Semite in the aftermath of the First World War" when the very selection from *Mein Kampf* which follows indicates clearly that Hitler was a confirmed anti-Semite long before leaving Vienna in 1913. On page 113 we are told that "there are thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union." But the census of 1959 indicates that there are more than two and a quarter million Jews living in the Soviet Union and that almost 500,000 of these gave Yiddish as their mother tongue.

IN SPITE OF THESE defects, the book will yield a great deal of interesting reading or re-reading. Macaulay's great Liberal 19th-century rhetoric, pleading for Jewish Emancipation, is still intermittently persuasive to the feelings, though after more than a century much of the famous speech has worn thin and its prevailing tone intellectually sounds today quite hollow. More effective and moving, more concrete and still fresh, are the 18th-century words of the American Ezra Stiles (a President of Yale University) recording in his diary shorthand the death of a Jewish friend: "On 28th of May died that amiable, benevolent, most hospitable and very respectable Gentleman, Mr. Aaron Lopez Merchant. . . . He did Business with the greatest Ease & Clearness—always carried about with him a Sweetness of Behav. a calm Urbanity, an agreeable & unaffected Politeness of manners. Without a single Enemy & the most Universally beloved by an extensive Acquaintance of any man I ever knew. His Beneficence to his Fam connections, to his Nation & to all the World is almost without a Parallel. He was my intimate Friend and Acquaintance! . . . The amiable & excellent Characters of a Lopez, of a Manasseh Ben Israel, of a Socrates & a Gangenelli, would almost persuade us to hope that their excellency was infused by Heaven, and that the virtuous and good of

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all Nations & Religions, notwithstand their Delusions, may be bro't together in Paradise. . . ."

How this sweetness contrasts with the bitterness of some other texts in the book!

"INFLUENCE" IN NEW HAVEN

WHO GOVERNS? DEMOCRACY AND POWER IN AN AMERICAN CITY. By ROBERT A. DAHL. *Yale University Press. 355 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by LEWIS A. COSER

A FEW YEARS AGO, in a much discussed study of power in a major Southern city, *Community Power Structure,* Floyd Hunter found that a small and unified group of top businessmen constituted the city's "power elite"—and he suggested by implication that similar situations probably obtained elsewhere. In a manner quite like C. Wright Mills's in *The Power Elite,* Hunter intimated that the democratic process was effectively stultified on the local level and that democratic decision-making was only a myth which served as an ideological cover for elite domination. Hunter's view has gained considerable plausibility in recent years; several investigators using his research methods to study other cities did in fact reach similar conclusions. Now, in his distinguished book *Who Governs?,* a study of the political process in New Haven, Robert Dahl challenges this image of community power. He argues that while in earlier periods power there was concentrated in a few hands, the breakdown first of patrician domination, and then the decline of the quasi-monopoly exerted by local entrepreneurs, have led to the emergence in New Haven of a pluralistic system of power.

Hunter in his book attempted to locate a power elite by asking local informants to name members of the community who reputedly wielded power. He compiled a list of these names—the top men in business, government, civic affairs, and community organizations—and then submitted it to local "judges," asking them to rank the names. Hunter then interviewed the top ranking men and asked each of them which men he would choose from the remaining list if a project requiring group decision were before the community. Hunter (and most of the investigators who used his technique) found that the top decision-making group consisted in the main of a small nucleus of important business leaders. Recently, however, this general technique has come under heavy criticism. Hunter's critics contended that the choices on his list were hypothetical; therefore the results revealed only a potential rather than an actual power structure. The method also assumed a static distribution of power, and the critics argued that power must always be viewed as a dynamic process. Finally, it was pointed out that Hunter tended to focus on voluntary associations and on civic committees and that he neglected to study the local governmental set-up and local political organizations.

Dahl has been among Hunter's most vocal critics, and in *Who Governs?* he illustrates an alternative approach for studying community power. Analyzing a series of recent major political decisions in New Haven, Dahl attempts through detailed interviews to ascertain the individuals who actually played crucial roles in these decisions. In other words, Dahl tries to specify each particular person who in a particular case chose to employ whatever potential power he possessed. The actual use of power, Dahl shows, depends on how a power-holder utilizes the resources he may have. Cash, credit, wealth, public office, control over information, popularity, and social standing are all unequally distributed in New Haven, as everywhere else. But access to such resources does not necessarily amount to political influence. Some wealthy men do indeed collect politicians, Dahl suggests; others choose instead to collect pictures.

Not only is it impermissible to assume actual power only on the basis of potential power, Dahl argues, one must also distinguish between *cumulative* inequalities and *dispersed* inequalities. Hunter seemed to suggest that power differentials must cumulate. Dahl shows that the opposite is true for New Haven. Different citizens use different kinds of resources in order to influence officials. No one resource dominates in every big decision.

Nor is there any cohesive power elite in New Haven which establishes all important public policies. Potential power-holders operate mainly in the limited areas which seem to touch their own vital interests. Individuals

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are also constrained by the competitive relation that exists between multiple centers of power. Moreover, only a small number of power-holders have enough power to initiate or veto proposals by themselves; thus to be successful most decision-makers must mobilize various citizens to use *their* potential resources. On the other hand, given the cleavages and divergencies among the leaders, the non-leaders have a substantial amount of freedom to employ their political resources where and when they wish. Dahl's fascinating analysis brings to mind a minuet: the politicians bow to influential citizens; and these return the bow—or search for another set of partners.

Dahl also investigates why individuals vary in the political resources they command. The first—and most obvious reason—is objective conditions. Wealth, education, even neighborhood—all these unequally distributed resources affect influence in the most clear-cut way. But subjective factors are also significant in this regard. Individuals vary in their attitudes and in the standards they use to appraise events around them. Thus, they vary in appraising their own power to influence decisions. Individuals may be highly self-confident or highly apathetic; they may be poorly informed about the operation of the political system or extremely sophisticated. For a student of power structures, variations in access to political resources are of obvious importance; but only close analysis of subjective interpretations, alternative opportunities, and the structure of interests will reveal whether a man actually decides to enter the political arena because of a specific issue. He may prefer to sit the decision out.

THE DISTINCT MERIT of *Who Governs?* lies in its demonstration that despite the considerable power differences within a community like New Haven and despite the small number of decision-makers in relation to the total population, one still cannot infer that the men of power are without restraint or without need of community support. The gross potential power that may reside in specific groups or strata cannot be turned at will into net actual power. To the extent, then, that restraints are built into a community power structure, pluralizing the centers of control and dispersing the power, to that extent the community differs from the almost totalitarian pattern—where a cohesive elite exercises all significant power—evoked by such analysts as C. Wright Mills.

Yet Dahl has not fully demonstrated to me that the notion of a power elite is utterly without value. Granted that in the decisions he surveyed, some economic notables did not choose to play a decisive part, the fact that they *might* have chosen to do so is an important datum which must be taken into account when trying to assess long-range trends. Precisely those powerful individuals who are identified by Hunter's technique may be the ones who count over the long run, even though they did not choose to act conspicuously in any one specific case. In other words, perhaps Hunter and Dahl's approaches can be combined if one realizes, to quote from an appraisal by the sociologist Peter Rossi, that "actual influence equals potential influence modified by opportunity, interest, and decision-making machinery."

Despite their rich accumulation of concrete detail, some of Dahl's pages also reflect a certain air of unreality. Why, for example, is there no mention of real-estate interests, especially in the extended discussion of urban renewal? Any city reporter is likely to know of many legitimate—and maybe not-so-legitimate—ways by which real-estate interests (from lowly slum landlords to highly respectable top men in business) are likely to influence renewal decisions. Dahl does say that more "economic dominants" were involved in urban renewal than in the other issues he discusses, but he detracts from the value of his study by omitting to identify the dominants concretely. One other example: I know but little about New Haven, but given our general knowledge of the manifold ways in which criminal elements have been able to influence political decisions in municipal affairs, is it likely that in New Haven such elements have no influence worth discussing? I am suggesting, in other words, that even though Dahl has advanced a highly sophisticated model of community power, he may yet have left out important variables which in certain circumstances and in certain areas can be major determinants of actual decisions. Has only the visible part of the iceberg caught his attention?

One last thought: Dahl has studied a community whose political scene has been

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invigorated in recent years by the actions of a determined, energetic, and enlightened set of political leaders. New Haven has become a model of urban development for all of America. How much then does Dahl's picture suffer from an optimistic bias because of the uniqueness of his original datum? Would he come to the same conclusions were he to describe politics in a city like Boston where, as Murray B. Levin has suggested in a recent study, massive political apathy and alienation determined the outcome of recent elections and where "the average voter believes that he is not part of the political structure and that he has no influence upon it." Again, when one reads in another recent study, *Decisions in Syracuse,* about the chaotic jungle of rival and overlapping jurisdictions which exist in that metropolitan area, one marvels indeed that anything ever gets done at all; and one gets a less sanguine impression about both the efficiency and the openness of the political process than Dahl's volume conveys.

Yet, when all is said and done, it remains that Dahl has written a book which no one interested in politics can afford to ignore.

THE MASTER IDEA OF HITLER

HITLER'S SECRET BOOK. Translated by Salvator Atlanasio. Introduction by Telford Taylor. *Grove Press. 216 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

THAT HITLER HAD written an unpublished sequel to *Mein Kampf,* concerned mainly with foreign policy, was known from two sources before the discovery of the typescript now published. In a valuable but little-known work published in 1949 one of his secretaries described it, remarking that Hitler scarcely ever mentioned it "and then only in moments of acute anxiety"; and one of these rare occasions is actually recorded in Hitler's table-talk. It was on February 17, 1942, when Hitler was talking to his usual private circle, with the addition of Himmler. Both Hitler, on that occasion, and his secretary, in recalling Hitler's words, dated the book 1925. It has now been discovered, and with the help of evidence supplied by a former employee of the Nazi publishing house in which it was kept, the story of its composition has been reconstructed. Internal evidence shows that Hitler misremembered the date of composition. It was written in the summer of 1928.

The occasion which called it forth was the question of the South Tyrol which, at that time, was particularly controversial and was causing great inconvenience to the Nazi party. The South Tyrol, the mainly German-speaking area of the Alto Adige and the Italian-speaking Trentino, had been detached from the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the victors of the First World War and awarded to Italy. At first the Italian government had been liberal enough, but with the advent of Fascism this changed, and German nationalism was inflamed by Mussolini's enforced Italianization of the South Tyrol. This was particularly embarrassing to Hitler who presented himself emphatically as a German nationalist but who, in *Mein Kampf,* had praised Mussolini and advocated an Italian alliance. In 1928 Nazism was anyway in decline; the South Tyrol question threatened to split its dwindling forces and gave its enemies a useful stick with which to beat it. It was in these circumstances that Hitler decided to add an epilogue to *Mein Kampf* showing that, in spite of his attitude to the South Tyrol, he was still the best German nationalist, and a far profounder political thinker than his adversaries who were so easily roused on that question, or at least used it to discredit him.

For what, asked Hitler, must the ultimate aims of any nationalist be? They must be to extend the area inhabited by German people to such frontiers as would guarantee its security, affluence, and power against disasters such as had overwhelmed it in the past. And what were those frontiers? a rectification on the Rhine? a few industries in Belgium? a couple of rural provinces beyond the Alps? Such ideas he rejected with scorn. They were the ideas of the Wilhelmine era, of the men who had betrayed Bismarck's heritage. A true foreign policy, Hitler insisted, must be the expression of the essential character and need of a people. It is therefore easily deducible, once one has analyzed that character and that need, and quite consistent: it becomes "traditional," like the policy of France and England. But the successors of Bismarck had never made the mental effort to discover Germany's essential character

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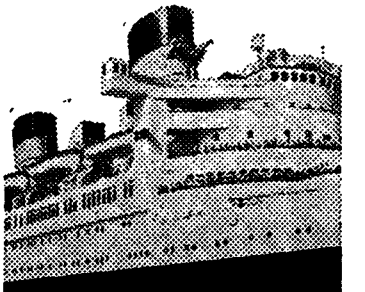
and need. For the sake of petty politics or mere prestige they had clung to the liability of the Triple Alliance—that dynastic alliance with Austria which preserved the status quo in Eastern Europe and ensured the unreliability of Italy, its third partner. For the sake of colonial ambitions they had alienated England which could anyway mop up the German colonies at will. And now the "bourgeois nationalist" parties of defeated Germany, in order to keep within the structure of the League of Nations, which was simply the guarantee of the Versailles settlement, were confining their ambitions to the South Tyrol or regretting the "senseless and catastrophic" German frontiers of 1914. Such aims, said Hitler, were contemptible in themselves. Moreover, they did not correspond with any basic German need.

For basically Germany needed far greater conquests than this. The Bismarckian frontiers were not final: they were only provisional. In the 20th century Germany must control a continental *hinterland* comparable with the vast spaces of America. There must be no scruples; all history is struggle; might is right, and modern pacifists can only enjoy the luxury of their idealism thanks to past injustice. Moreover, this new empire can only be obtained in one direction: "the question of space for our people cannot be solved either in the west or in the south of Europe." It must be sought "solely and exclusively" in "territory in the East."

Once that basic need is clear, the true foreign policy for Germany is deducible. The idea of alliance with Russia is of course "fantastic." Russia is to be the victim. Equally, the enmity of France must always be presumed, for it is France, in 1928 as in 1925, which animates the machinery enclosing Germany within its present frontiers, to the East as well as to the West. On the other hand neither England nor Italy has any basic need to oppose German expansion in East Europe, and Italy has a positive interest in opposing French policy in Europe as in the Mediterranean. Therefore "since the year 1920 I have tried with all means and most persistently to accustom the National Socialist movement to the idea of an alliance between Germany, Italy and England." Compared with the vast empire to which that policy could lead, what is the South Tyrol over whose fate the "bourgeois na-



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tionalists" now shed their "crocodile tears"?

Such were the views which Hitler wrote down in 1928. In substance they add nothing to those already expressed in *Mein Kampf*. The importance of this book is not in its novelty, but in its sameness. In season and out of season, Hitler never lost sight of his ultimate aim. So far from being, as he has recently been described, an adventurer who merely responded to opportunities, he was one of the most consistent of statesmen. In fact, in 1928, the views which he prepared to publish were unseasonable. The South Tyrol crisis soon passed; with the coming of the depression the "bourgeois nationalists" began to turn toward Hitler; and it would have been inopportune to alienate them by republishing, in a more tactless form, a manifesto whose substance was already in print (and not selling too well either) in *Mein Kampf*. But for all that, Hitler never forgot about this unpublished book. He pursued his pro-Italian policy to the end—indeed, at the very end, he considered that he had sacrificed too much to it. And no doubt he would have pursued his pro-English policy to the end too, had he been able. In 1939, we are told, when the British government declared war, he broke out into a violent tirade, exclaiming to Hess, "Now my whole work is in ruins. My book is written in vain."

THE FIGURE OF NIEBUHR

COURAGE TO CHANGE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR. By JUNE BINGHAM. *Scribner's. 414 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by DANIEL J. CALLAHAN

EARLY IN HER BOOK, Mrs. Bingham remarks that Reinhold Niebuhr does not know how to cope with the praise of his students. "He genuinely does not like," she tells us, "overpraise or adulation." In that case, I am afraid, he must wince whenever *Courage to Change* is mentioned. Not only does Mrs. Bingham herself unceasingly praise him, she has collected from diverse dust jackets, LP albums, and testimonials almost every other good word that has ever been uttered about the man. The high school girl who, according to Mrs. Bingham, was "all a-tremble" after hearing Niebuhr preach is not neglected either. For this reason the best way to describe her portrait is to say that it is non-Niebuhrean: the picture that emerges is one of a man relatively unmarked by the kinds of discolorings, tensions, and self-interest which Niebuhr sees as endemic to the human self.

Of course, if Mrs. Bingham had attempted a Niebuhrean analysis of Niebuhr himself the results could have been far worse—and probably distasteful. But one might at least have hoped for a less partisan, less enraptured, stance. As it is, one must settle for what she has given us: a simple account of his thought and a bright picture of his personality. Once one adjusts to a prose style that vacillates between that of *McCall's* and the *New Yorker*—and learns to black out when such matters as the Niebuhrs' two poodles are given nearly a full page—the book provides a number of redeeming and useful insights. Unlike most of the more serious studies of Niebuhr which have appeared of late, this one at least is not dull and tediously boring. Nor does Niebuhr appear only as an almost omniscient person, given to manufacturing epigrams and paradoxes in box-car lots. He remains, at least, human.

What accounts for Mrs. Bingham's success is the strategy she has employed. By alternating biographical chapters with chapters describing his thought, she manages to show in a vivid fashion the close relationship between Niebuhr's principles and his actions, his theological beliefs and his political commitments. The reason, for instance, that Niebuhr has been such a prodigious signer of petitions, such a tireless supporter and organizer of causes, and such a joiner of organizations becomes quite clear. The very nature of his principles, as he reads them, requires that he act and not just tell others that they should act. So too does his distaste, in his words, for "that harmless individual, the modern parson."

But the most significant thing about Mrs. Bingham's approach is that it illuminates very effectively how decisive Niebuhr's reflections on the human self have been for every other area of his wide interests. One might, despite its odd sound, call him a theological Erich Fromm, given to seeing very private human anxieties and dilemmas projected on to the world stage; seeing the

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problems of societies and man in the mass as analogues of individual problems. While other studies have not overlooked this turn of Niebuhr's mind, Mrs. Bingham sharply emphasizes it, making good use of seemingly idle biographical details to underscore the point. This emphasis makes us recall, as well, how much for all their real differences Niebuhr and that other great lover of paradoxes, Sören Kierkegaard, have in common. Both remind us of the fact of sin, of human finiteness, of the ambiguous character of ethical demands. Yet there is one essential difference, one which shows how many of the same premises can be put to entirely different uses. It was Kierkegaard who said "both/and is the way to hell." For Niebuhr, by contrast, it is the Kierkegaardian "either/or" which leads us down the well-known path. One can, with this difference in mind, describe Niebuhr's theological and political thought as a venture in arguing that the only realistic approach to ethical dilemmas is one which recognizes that we are always faced with competing values. We can rarely make a simple choice between good and evil; we are forced, in the concrete, to choose both.

Life, for Niebuhr, never presents itself in a black or white fashion: neither the statesman, the theologian, nor the politician can simply come down on the side of the good. Man, however pure he may think his values and his motives, is the victim of self-interest. His thoughts, words, and actions have an inescapably self-centered ideological taint to them. "We are," Niebuhr says in a characteristic passage, "not only not as good as our ideals but we tend to use our ideals as weapons of prestige, failing to recognize that our ideals are not as good as we pretend they are." At the same time, however, despite the impediments of his nature, it is both possible and necessary that man act responsibly. Man is both determined and responsible; his actions both pure and self-serving. What is true of the individual is all the more true of nations, churches, and political groups: they especially fail to see the difference between their pretensions and reality, fail to note the mottled gray coloring of their idealistic thrusts. The self-righteousness of a Dulles and a Stalin gave them more in common than met the eye.

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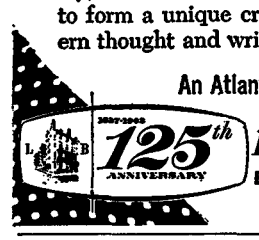

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The trouble, of course, with all this—with, in the end, Niebuhr's emphasis on sin and finiteness—is that one may draw conclusions quite the opposite of Niebuhr's. The difference between realism and cynicism is a subtle one. In the hands of the wrong man a belief in original sin can be used to justify a denial of all responsibility and a wholly cynical reading of the human situation. An obsession with the ambiguity of moral choices may lead one to throw up one's hands and think that all choices are equally good or equally bad. If nothing is clear, all knowledge tainted by ideology, all motives mixed, what is the use? If one adds to this discouraging prospect an assertion that "Every truth can be made the servant of sinful arrogance, including the prophetic truth that all men fall short of the truth," then even our humility and realism can ill serve us. How far can this sort of thing be carried without moral choice and conviction becoming altogether meaningless?

Niebuhr, obviously enough, has gone to great lengths to meet this kind of charge, to get us out of the trap into which his realism seems to lead us. This he has done by emphasizing that human freedom is as much

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a datum as determinism, by stressing the power of grace, and by steadfastly maintaining that the self can transcend on occasion its ordinary nature. People do, despite an abiding self-interest, perform selfless acts; men do now and then forget themselves for the sake of an other-directed value or goal. Even a nation, more limited than man by self-interest, can sometimes manage to do the unlikely. The Marshall Plan was such an occasion. "In it," Niebuhr holds, "prudent self-interest was united with concern for others in a fashion which represents the most attainable virtue of nations." Even if one is prone, as I am, to take a more optimistic view of what is "attainable virtue" for a nation, this is a wise and balanced judgment. It is the kind of judgment that always makes Niebuhr worth listening to.

What is curious, however, is that so many disparate people have found Niebuhr worth listening to. Few Christian theologians, especially American ones, have had anywhere near his influence among those of a radically different persuasion. One explanation might be simply that he is an intelligent, passionate, articulate man, the kind one grants a hearing even if one abhors his determining principles. But this explanation will hardly do. His principles are too interwoven into his concrete observations and recommendations to be divorced from them, as if one could choose the latter while decisively rejecting the former. More pertinent, I believe, is Niebuhr's capacity for singling out those elements in human experience which give meaning to our triumphs and our failures, whether one chooses to give them a Christian reading or not. For Niebuhr, Christianity provides one with a set of images and symbols of man's situation. Whether one is inclined to see more than just images or nothing at all more is almost beside the point. What counts is that the images make a great deal of sense out of the kinds of dilemmas men and nations continually encounter. In a world notably short of images of man which are not blatantly sentimental or crudely debasing, Niebuhr's have a depth and inclusiveness which is difficult to shrug off.

This is not to say that I am quite the disciple of Niebuhr that my words may suggest. But one doesn't have to be a disciple to appreciate the rareness of his gifts. Nor can one really object if, with someone like Niebuhr, a biographer like Mrs. Bingham gives him his due and quite a bit more. We can all use a few fanatical friends.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

ELLEN MOERS is the author of *The Dandy*, a social and literary study.

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H. R. TREVOR-ROPER is the well-known authority on Hitler and Nazi Germany.

DANIEL J. CALLAHAN, a new reviewer, is an associate editor of *The Commonweal.*

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